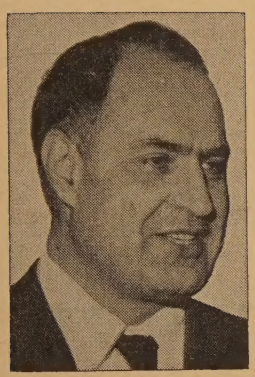
The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching



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OF RELIGION

Will Herberg: The Strangeness of Faith

Mayo Yates Smith • The Work of Ministry

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David B. Watermulder • Bold Enough to Fail

Markus Barth • Here Is a Man

JAMES B. ASHBROOK AND HARVEY GUTHRIE
WHEN MINISTERS FACE THEMSELVES

VOL. XXXI, No. 6 JUNE 1960

The Pulpit

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PULPIT POST

Pipe Line to God

SIR: A sentence in the March issue made me sit up and blink. William Hamilton in his review of four books makes the following statement: ". . . it may be further said that Brunner's views on election are probably closer to Paul, and Barth's may be closer to the truth."

Does Barth know more of eternal truth than the inspired Scripture writer? I think Barth would be the first to repudiate the idea that he was expounding something "closer to the truth" than Paul.

Just what special pipe line to the mind of God enables this reviewer to assure us that a writer outside the sacred Scriptures is closer to the truth than the principal writer of those Scriptures? What is his criterion of "truth"?

WILLIAM H. MAWSON
Kermit, Texas

Communication Lost

SIR: I have read with interest your editorial "First a Purpose" in the April issue. It stresses the preposition in the phrase "*for* contemporary preaching."

Well, who is doing it? Perhaps we should give some credit to secular editors such as Mr. Catledge, managing editor of the *New York Times*. In a recent address to California editors he said "complacency has settled like a gray cloud upon our society, which, if not dispelled, will lead us all to self-destruction," and that it is the business of newspapers to help dispel the cloud. Is it not also the business of churches?

Another editor, formerly of Little Rock, says we have perfected the art of communication but have nothing to communicate. Have we lost the art of communication with God and our fellow men? Perhaps Lincoln was right in 1863 when he said, "We have forgotten God and are too proud to pray to the God who made us."

Perhaps we have had too many books on positive thinking and not enough on positive repentance on a nation-wide scale.

CLAUDE W. WARREN
Rothschild, Wis.

The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

VOLUME XXXI JUNE 1960 No. 6

The Radical Defect In Current Preaching

"CLERGYMEN are numerous, but prophets are few." This line from a new anthology, *The Best of Charles E. Jefferson,** is a just and accurate indictment of current preaching. With one incisive stroke it uncovers the "radical defect," the weakness underlying the decadence of the American pulpit. By the word "prophets" Dr. Jefferson did not mean social reformers; in fact, he insisted that a man who is solely a pulpit reformer "does not wear his crown long." He was referring rather to men who with conviction and passion and in truth hopefully speak for God, whose pulpits remind men, not of the lecturer's dais or the forum or a cozy experiment in group dynamics, but of Sinai, Calvary and the Areopagus.

Whatever else may be missing from our preaching, the major deficiency is spiritual passion. Our reference here, of course, is not to the simulated earnestness and the feigned enthusiasm which can be adopted and projected by an artful actor but to that passion which consumes the minister when God grips him with a Word to speak and the compulsion to speak it. We think at once of Baxter who preached "as never sure to preach again and as a dying man to dying men"; of Alexander Whyte who mounted to his pulpit week after week in fear and trembling, gripped by a power which would not let him flee elsewhere; of a Paul crying, "Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel." This is the *sine qua non* of good preaching; it is well to ask ourselves whether this one thing is lacking.

This line from Jefferson which scores the tameness, the superficiality and the ambivalence of much of our preaching comes from a book which in its design serves as a parable. It is a parable which declares the difference between prophetic preaching and other forms of public address. The first half of the book is devoted to sermons; the second half to conversations. This division and the contrast between the sermons and the conversations are a corrective to which preachers should pay close heed. The conversations deal in the main with themes which are pertinent and timely, but their importance is penultimate. They are prudential moralities on such themes as thoughtfulness, patience, contentment; practical instructions to laymen, ministers, ministers' wives; and quiet talks for family settings. No one reading them would question the value of such discourses or their art, skill and winsomeness. But they are not sermons; they are homilies — pleasing discourses, instructive talks on familiar themes.

When we turn to Jefferson's sermons, we find ourselves in a different realm. The contrast between what he said in the pulpit and what he said in other settings is striking and conclusive. The subjects of the sermons were also pertinent and practical; they addressed man, as he is and where he is; but they brought to him something more than man's word to man. The difference is that the themes of the sermons were not only timely and practical but also timeless and ultimate; they were magnificent subjects magnificently developed: God, the Bible, the continuous yearning of the soul for its Redeemer, eternal life, the divine demand for social vision. To be sure, Dr. Jefferson did not wander aimlessly over the broad scope of each of these subjects. His selectivity and his emphasis brought each message to a penetrating shape which stirred the conscience and moved the will; nevertheless, all that he had to say in each of these sermons had direct rootage in some cardinal declaration of the gospel.

If men ascend into the pulpit under no sense of power, if they carry to it nothing more than a man talking to men, it would be better for it to remain empty. In a very real sense this is a plea for a return to doctrinal and biblical preaching. Our Protestant fathers bounded the sermon with a definition which excludes from the pulpit the merely conversational themes: "Doctrines must be preached practically, and duties doctrinally." Belief is not expendable; doctrines cannot be evaded. Any sermon which does not find itself at home somewhere within this ample definition is simply not a sermon.

If we must confess that our preaching is often tepid, ephemeral, vacillating, we must confess also that this is a condition which begins in us. Somewhere, somehow, we have misplaced the Word which God entrusted to us. Our first task as we seek to restore to the pulpit its relevancy and its power is the rediscovery of that Word.

KYLE HASELDEN

* *The Best of Charles E. Jefferson*, selected and introduced by Frederick Keller Stamm. (Thomas Y. Crowell Company, $3.95).

The Strangeness of Faith

By Will Herberg

I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth.

Revelation 3:15-16.

I PREACH today on a text from Martin Luther who so well understood the strangeness of faith. "I will say one thing boldly and freely," Luther once declared. "Nobody in this life is nearer to God than those who hate and deny him, and he has no more pleasing, no more dear children than these." What shall we make of this astounding statement? What could Luther conceivably have meant by such an incredible assertion: no one in this life nearer to God, no one dearer to him, than those who hate and deny him? Shall we charge it to Luther's notorious fondness for utterances violent and extreme, or does this paradox reveal something profound about the meaning of faith that we in our conventional piety tend to overlook?

I think that perhaps the latter is the case. Luther's statement, however shocking and extreme it may sound, seems to me to point to a profound truth that lies at the very heart of authentic faith: that unless God matters infinitely, he does not matter at all. There is something absolute about faith which demands everything or nothing. Faith is not just one more interest or attachment in life, side by side with other interests and attachments; if it were merely that, it would indeed be nothing at all. "Faith," the great Jewish philosopher Martin Buber has said, "is not a feeling in the soul, but an entrance into reality, an entrance into the whole reality without reduction or curtailment." If it is genuine, it is everything; it touches everything and transforms everything, and when it is thrown into question, everything is thrown into question: all life is at stake.

That is what Luther is saying. The passionate unbeliever who "hates" and "denies" God may be all wrong in his ideas, but at least he takes God seriously. This kind of unbeliever is no mere unbeliever; he is rather an antibeliever whose whole life is a wrestling with God, whose whole mind is preoccupied with the problem of faith. Whatever else he may do, he does not take God for granted; he does not commit the ultimate sin of indifference. For that reason, Luther insists, he is near to God and dear to him.

The Ultimate Sin

Not unbelief but indifference, not atheism but taking God for granted, is the ultimate sin. Let me put it another way: not skeptical questioning, not even passionate denial of God, is so displeasing to him as the lukewarmness of conventional piety. This is what Luther is saying; and in saying this he is merely echoing the searing words with which the Bible denounces the lukewarm in faith. Very few people nowadays read that strange book that comes at the end of the New Testament, the Book of Revelation; but we miss a great deal in overlooking it. For it is filled with the burning passion of faith which kindles the imagination, despite the grotesque and often weird imagery in which it is expressed. There are those unforgettable chapters in which the seven churches in Asia are described by means of "letters" addressed to their "angels" or spiritual leaders. To the church in Laodicea the Almighty dictates the following message: "I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth." We all belong to this church of Laodicea, the church of the lukewarm; so let us take these words to heart. God can forgive anything but he cannot forgive

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WILL HERBERG *is professor of Judaic studies and social philosophy at Drew University and was formerly on the staff of the Washington School of Psychiatry. Well known in the fields of social research and theology, he served for many years as research analyst for an AFL labor union. Author and editor of several outstanding works, his book* Protestant-Catholic-Jew *has received wide acclaim.*

Occasionally we receive letters from readers who ask, "What kind of sermons is The Pulpit looking for?" "The Strangeness of Faith" by Will Herberg gives us an example to which we can point as we say, "This kind, for one." Biblically rooted, throbbing with prophetic passion, eloquently expressed, enlisting illustrations which throw the message forward, this sermon drives the hearer from the strangeness of faith to the seriousness of faith to the God who is faithful.

mediocrity. Those who are mediocre in faith — neither hot nor cold but lukewarm — he spews forth.

Friedrich Nietzsche, the German philosopher, had his mixed feelings about the New Testament, but this passage at least he must have understood and approved. For Nietzsche the atheist was infuriated at the utter insipidity of so much of the Christianity of his time. Mockingly, passionately, he denounced its stodginess, its superficiality, its sentimentalism; with blinding anger he exposed the degradation of the faith into a conventional sanctification of conventional mediocrity. Who today takes God seriously? he demanded; and because he looked and looked and could find no one in whatever direction he turned, he proclaimed defiantly that God was "dead." He was wrong; God was not "dead"; what was dead was the faith of the conventional piety that had so degraded God. Yet, in his error Nietzsche was surely less distant from God's truth than were the conventional believers who so self-righteously denounced him: he took God seriously; they took him for granted.

Atheism: Faith Inverted

Where do we find our Nietzsches today? We have none and we are much the poorer for their absence. On one campus where I have spent a good deal of time there was an old professor now retired, a man of great eminence in his field. Whenever anyone spoke to me about him, it was always with an indulgent smile: "He's our campus atheist," they would say; "don't take him too seriously." Yet I learned to take him seriously enough, for he took with the utmost seriousness the questions I was there to discuss. He attended all the lectures and meetings, even the chapel service, raised every conceivable objection, and threw himself heart and soul into the controversy. The topics we discussed meant much to him, as one could readily see from his eagerness and excitement. Yes, he was an "atheist"; but he was obsessed, literally obsessed, with the things of God. His more religious colleagues dismissed him, together with his atheism, as a leftover from an age past and gone, as indeed he was. But I am afraid that some of them were as much perplexed by the passion of his concern as by his atheistic opinions. They could not see that his passion was the passion of faith curiously inverted; his very denial of God was, strangely enough, a testimony to God's reality and power. They, the more conventionally pious, had in their very piety lost the almost feverish sense of excitement at things divine which the old man, for all his atheism — perhaps even because of his atheism — still retained.

Luther would have known what to make of this man as he would have known what to make of Friedrich Nietzsche, the man who scandalized the world of his time by proclaiming that God was dead. Luther understood men like these; he opposed them but he understood them. What infuriated Luther was not passionate doubt or denial but conventional piety. In uttering his paradoxical words about the God-denier who is near to God, Luther was denouncing the conventional piety of the good, self-satisfied Christians in the pews, and attempting to shock them into a sense of their condition. For the condition of the good, self-satisfied Christian, of the religious man of conventional piety, is a perilous one indeed. He has put God in his place, somewhere on the margin of life, where he permits him to occupy a very honorable position but also a very innocuous one. Conventional piety issues no challenge and makes no demand; it merely reassures the church member that all is well with him because he, after all, is on the inside of the church, engaged in pious works and exercises, while the unbeliever is on the outside in outer darkness. In this way conventional piety tends to confirm man in his self-righteousness and good opinion of himself; indeed, it often actually supplies him with another device by which these may be sanctioned in the name of religion. For there is something strangely ambiguous about religion. It is, on the one side, man's openness to the divine, but on the other side, it is always being converted into a means of spiritual self-sufficiency, which shuts one off from God. Religion and church membership may thus well become a kind of defense that the conventionally religious man throws up to protect himself against the absolute demand of faith. That is why the great Christian theologian Karl Barth is always warning us that "the church is not only the place where man meets God; it is often also the place where man makes his last stand against God." How? By using religion and church membership to bolster his self-complacency. When that happens, the witness of the passionate unbeliever, who takes his unbelief and therefore God seriously, becomes a witness to God. For it is a challenge to a religion that has become detestable to God because it has become a routine, conventional cult of reassurance.

A Much-Needed Witness

The witness of the passionate unbeliever to the seriousness of faith and the all-importance of God is a witness that men have needed at all times, but at no time perhaps more than today. For today, with the boom in religion under way in this country, we are in danger of being stifled by a heavy blanket of conventional religiosity as superficial and shoddy as anything known in history. Everybody is religious and religion is everywhere, but it is a religion that is little more than a celebration of the values of our culture and a way of achieving "peace of mind" and the "power of positive thinking" in a situation where it is rather "divine discontent" and an unblinking confrontation of the

hard facts of life that are required. Contemporary American religiosity is converting God into a great cosmic public utility which we find useful in advancing our purposes as individuals and as a nation. We have appointed God to his place in our scheme of things, and we are sure that since we are "religious" he will not fail us in the duties we have assigned to him. Having settled that little detail, we can go on to the things that really count, the things that John Wesley was wont to describe as the "pride and desire of life," in other words, the things through which we can display to all the world our success and superiority. No wonder that over half of the American people who say that they regard religion as a "very important thing" also readily admit that their religious beliefs have little or nothing to do with their ideas on economics or politics or other concerns of everyday life. Our lives we fashion on other grounds and other principles, and then we look to God, if we look to him at all, to certify our values and guarantee their success.

A Challenge to Complacency

It is here that the unbeliever utters his word of denial as a challenge to our complacency. Are we really so sure of God as we like to believe? Note that here the unbeliever with his questioning, and the prophet with his word of judgment and wrath, join in shattering the false securities we have built up in the name of religion. It is indeed sometimes not easy to tell them apart, the prophet and the unbeliever. That great Christian thinker Soren Kierkegaard to whom we owe so much of contemporary religious philosophy, ended his brief and stormy life with a series of writings which he called "Attack Upon Christendom." By "Christendom" Kierkegaard meant the established, conventional Christianity of his time. What he found so repulsive in it was the all-pervading, though unconscious, hypocrisy in which it was involved: the Christian faith in all its ultimacy was indeed affirmed, but life continued to be lived on the comfortable level of human self-sufficiency. Whatever else he could tolerate, this was one thing Kierkegaard could not stand, and he lashed out at it with all the scorn and fury at his command. No wonder so many of the scandalized churchmen of his time put him down as an atheist, a madman, or both! How could one claim to be religious and yet say such horrible things about religion!

If Kierkegaard is the God-possessed prophet who speaks words that make him sound like an atheist, Freud, like Nietzsche, is the atheist who speaks words that have their prophetic ring. Freud, as we all know, was hostile to religion; but then much of what he took for religion was sham and deserved his hostility. Above all, Freud hated sham. He had a truly Kierkegaardian contempt for those who were trying to win favor for religion by presenting it under false colors so as to deprive it of its "scandal" and challenge. In the midst of one of his diatribes against religion, he breaks out with these impassioned words: "One would like to count oneself among the believers so as to be able to admonish the philosophers who try to preserve the God of religion by substituting for him an impersonal, shadowy, abstract principle, and say to them: 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain!' " In these words Freud the atheist stands at the verge of the faith he denied; and we who espouse this faith can recognize in him, despite himself, a witness to the God of Truth we serve.

Obsessed with God

Yes, the God-obsessed God-affirmer and God-obsessed God-denier have something in common that we do not always estimate at its true worth. Both insist on ruthlessly tearing away the false securities we build up in the name of religion and forcing us to confront God and his absolute demand face to face — the prophet out of the passion of faith, the unbeliever out of the passion of doubt, but both out of the passion of infinite concern. It is this infinite concern that is at the heart of the matter. Where that is present, even though in negative form, there is nearness to God; where that is absent, nothing remains.

I do not want to disparage the importance of right belief in the life of faith. It is both central and indispensable, for right belief in matters of faith is essentially a right understanding of one's existence and a right direction to one's life. Nor do I want to minimize the gross errors in matters of belief committed by Nietzsche, Freud and the other unbelievers of whom I have spoken. Nietzsche's views on Christianity were perverse and often incoherent; Freud's views on religion were something of which not even his most devoted disciples are particularly proud. We need not mince words: Freud's philosophical outlook was shallow and crude, his understanding of the Jewish and Christian religions embarrassingly superficial, and his venture into the formal critique of religion a lamentable blunder. The explicit teachings of these men as they deal with religion are often dangerously misleading and have misled many fine minds. This we cannot overlook or excuse. And yet — for there is a "yet" — and yet it is not the last word. Luther was surely not unaware that the teachings of those who "hate and deny" God were false and blasphemous (he even uses this very word "blasphemous"); yet he also understood that for all their grievous error, they were performing a service on behalf of the truth and the God of Truth: they were denouncing spiritual sham and calling to spiritual authenticity, even if the true nature of this authenticity was hidden from them. Because this was what they were doing, Luther was bold enough to assert that they were "near and dear" to God.

Luther was a great man of God and a great theologian. He saw the perils of false belief, but he also saw the perils of conventional religion. He had the courage to state the paradoxes of faith in opposition to conventional piety with the whole force of his being. Speaking thus, Luther spoke in a great tradition, stretching all the way from the prophets of Israel to the so-called "religious existentialists" of today. And just as Luther dared to say that "nobody in this life is nearer to God than those who hate and deny him," so today we should have the courage to consider the possibility that unreligious, even antireligious poets, novelists and philosophers may have more to say to us about the deepest problems of faith than those who drone out the pious platitudes of conventional religion, or those who try to convert these platitudes into a cheery, self-serving gospel of "peace of mind" and "positive thinking." There is a deeper and more genuine understanding of the religious dimension of life, it seems to me, in an "existentialist" novel such as *The Plague* or *The Fall* by Albert Camus than in all the exhortations of the professional purveyors of the gospel of reassurance put together. But was not Camus an atheist? Perhaps, but he was an atheist concerned — one might almost say obsessed — with the ultimate problems of human life and therefore with God, though it is a God he did not know, while the conventional representatives of religion seem to be concerned mainly with "being religious," which almost leaves God out of the picture.

It is this concern that is decisive one way or the other. The one unforgivable sin, let me remind you, is lukewarmness, mediocrity, taking God for granted. The man of faith, in his passionate concern with the ultimate, is sometimes less distant from Luther's "God-denier" than he is from the conventional believer, precisely because the former is passionately concerned with the ultimate and the latter is not. Luther understood this very well; so did the eighteenth century Jewish teacher, Nahman of Bratslav. One day a man came to Rabbi Nahman defiantly yet anxiously proclaiming that he did not believe in God. "So," said Rabbi Nahman, "you don't believe in God; why get so excited about it? If God does not exist, it can't be very important, can it?" "But, rabbi," the unbeliever expostulated, "how can you talk that way? It *is* important; it's the most important thing in the world." "Then, my son," said Rabbi Nahman, "you need not despair: though far from God, you are near to him." Martin Luther and Nahman of Bratslav: they understood the meaning of faith.

Thoughts on Preaching

✚ IN ITS simplest and most diluted form, preaching is telling someone else, one or many, about Jesus Christ, and opening out the mind and will of God. — *James Black, The Mystery of Preaching*

✚ TO TEACH religion the first thing needful, and the last, and indeed the only thing is to find a man who *has* religion. — *Thomas Carlyle*

✚ UNLESS spiritual knowledge and the Spirit himself speak through the preachers . . . the final result will be that everyone preaches his own whims, and instead of the gospel and its exposition we shall again have sermons on blue ducks. — *Martin Luther*

✚ GREAT men do not play stage tricks with doctrines of life and death; only little men do that. — *John Ruskin*

✚ THE CHIEF virtue that language can have is clearness, and nothing detracts from it so much as the use of unfamiliar words. — *Galen*

✚ IF I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. — *I Corinthians 13:1*

✚ NONTHEOLOGICAL advice on sermon composition — Cicero: "To know what we should say, and to know in what order, is indeed a thing of great importance; but to know *how* we must say it, is a thing of much greater importance." . . . Henry James: "What is merely stated is never really presented." . . . Van Wyck Brooks: "There is nothing more discouraging than to face a blank sheet of paper at the start of a day's work." . . . Hugh Miller: "The true secret of editing is to know what to put into the wastebasket."

✚ AN ORAL address to the popular mind, on religious truth contained in the Scriptures, and elaborately treated with a view to persuasion. — *Austin Phelps*

✚ THERE are five requirements for a good sermon idea, according to H. Grady Davis:

It must be narrow enough to be sharp.
It must have in it a force that is expanding.
It must be true.
It must be loaded with the realities of the human heart.
It must be one of the many facets of the gospel of Christ.

(From *Design for Preaching*, Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia, 1958. Used by permission.)

Harvey Guthrie

WHEN MINISTERS

A Candid Study of the

THE MINISTER is a public figure. As such he lives largely in a glass showcase. He is expected to act in certain ways, think prescribed thoughts and be a conventional type of person. Inevitably, though, his public self does not always coincide with his private self. To some degree this is true of everyone; and, in the sense that a person is always more than a conscious self, it is right that it should be so.

The danger point comes, however, when there is a radical opposition between the public self and the private self. The greater the gap, the greater the tension. The ministry is a vocation which in most cases is more demanding of the person as person than other vocations; it is essential for the minister to be as "whole" a person as possible. He needs to be so integrated that his outer life and his inner life complement each other rather than compete with each other.

But what does the minister do when he suffers the turmoil of a divided self, when his private self and public self are at odds? To whom can he turn? Probably not to ecclesiastical superiors. Seldom to a fellow minister. And yet he himself is in need of being ministered unto. Such is the dilemma facing far more ministers than we realize.

To analyze this problem an experiment in group therapy for ministers has been undertaken, covering a period of three years. In the course of that period there have been three different groups with a total of fifteen men. They have represented the following ecclesiastical traditions: Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Baptist, Lutheran, Christian and Community. The men ranged in age from twenty-six to fifty-one years. At some time each of them had undergone intensive psychotherapy. For some it preceded their coming into the group and so for them the group became a bridge out of therapy back into regular responsibility. For others the need for therapy became apparent and was undertaken during the group experience. For them the group served as a complement to the individual therapy and thereby hastened the healing process.

While utilizing "depth" dynamics (i.e., dreams, transference, etc.), the group encounter focused primarily on the man as minister: what that means in relation to his vocational calling, his responsibility in the church, his relationship with fellow ministers and his relationship with his family. The group approach is no substitute for the rigors of personal psychotherapy nor is personal psychotherapy a substitute for community encounter. They complement and reinforce each other.

The purpose of this article is not to go into the process of the group encounter, nor is it to evaluate the results of the experiment. Rather the purpose is to present a summary of the material discussed by the men in one particular group meeting over a period of a year. On the basis of this material we have a fairly clear picture of what ministers feel are the sensitive spots of their lives.

In presenting this data there is no claim that this covers the sensitive spots of every minister. It is always risky to make broad generalizations on the basis of a very meager bit of evidence. Each man is unique. Some men are more adequate; other men are less adequate. However, one might venture to say that because of the representative background of these men and because of the underlying similarities, the sensitive spots that did emerge fairly well encompass the anxiety fields of most ministers. Not every man feels every tension, but most of the tensions felt are touched on here.

One further qualification is necessary. These

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The need of clergymen to be ministered unto as well as to minister is clearly portrayed in this clinical study of the frustrations and anxieties of fifteen responsible "ministers of stature." While this study admittedly gives only one profile of the minister, it speaks in varying degrees to all ministers. As embarrassing as it is to do so, it is essential for ministers to face themselves; this searching article will help us to do so.

James B. Ashbrook

FACE THEMSELVES

Personal Life of the Minister

men were all ministers of stature, carrying responsibilities not only within their own parishes but also within denominational and interdenominational structures. They were not "queer" or "different." They were you and I. The only difference was that out of a compelling desire to become free of themselves in order to serve God more worthily they deliberately entered into relationships in which their inner anxieties and weaknesses would be brought out into the open. Thus, in the report of this data the reader will be receiving a one-sided picture — a picture primarily of problems. It is like the priest's observation in Graham Greene's *The Heart of the Matter:* "We only see the unimportant side of men, for men only come to us to confess their sins. They do not come to confess their virtues." In what follows we see only the unimportant side of the ministry (if any part of the self is unimportant): the frustrations, the fears, the failures. These appeared in the group because each man was trying to deal with that within himself which needed attention. It was inevitable, therefore, that the joy, the faith, the hope, the fulfillment of the ministry took second place. But it took second place only that it might again become first.

Initially we examine now what was revealed through our sessions about the minister as a man of faith. For that clearly he was. Otherwise he would not have been within the circle of faith either personally or vocationally. Regardless of the complexity of motives and concerns, he identified himself publicly not only with the Christian tradition but also with the Christian ministry.

Guilt

If one word, though, were used to describe the general attitude here, it is *guilt.* Part of the motivation for entering the ministry in the first place was the longing for ordination to set right the unhappiness of a life divided, to atone for sin. They hoped, even as Luther had, that preoccupation with ritual and activity would free them from uneasiness. One might even escape God by serving God!

Guilt too was a definite factor in the man's ongoing experience within the circle of faith. There was the "intolerable burden of responsibility as God's spokesman." How could a man avoid confusing what he said with what God said? It was impossible to proclaim the Word while being so finite and so sinful. As spokesman of God, the minister himself should know the undergirding strength of the I-Thou encounter, and yet such was more the exception than the rule.

For example, the minister ought to be able to use his devotional life as a way of meeting needs for support, growth and conviction. Prayer, unfortunately, had so ceased to have significance that one was discouraged from further attempts. For some it had become a problem only because of their sense of guilt in having given up private prayer altogether.

A major part of the difficulty with public and private expressions of faith lay in interpersonal relationships. As one person put it, "I have begun to realize that treating other people as things makes you treat yourself as a thing. And then God can be nothing else but a thing also. You cannot have a personal God as long as your relationships are primarily impersonal."

Closely related to this was a common feeling that the traditional language and symbols of faith had lost their power to communicate in any meaningful manner. If their use did not elicit resentment, they were at least a matter of indifference. They were forms that seemed incapable of expressing real vitality. At the same time, though, there was a growing feeling that these symbols, which represented the distilled deposit of historic experience, were potentially of profound significance. They had not arisen out of a context of dehumanization, and so was it not possible to re-enter those depths which alone testify to their reality?

The emptiness of the formal content of the faith echoed a feeling that the church and the ministry were "irrelevant." Since the church seemed to be so peripheral in the loyalties of the vast numbers of its members, and since so much of its activity was "sound and fury," the inevitable

question could not help but be asked: Is there anything here at all? When you come right down to it, so the feeling went, little or nothing is worth the effort!

In looking to the past there were occasional barbs at their training for the ministry. A gulf was felt to exist between the intellectual "fantasies" of seminary work and the emotional "pains" of the actual life of the minister in the church. The seminary's very reason for existence seemed to be exhaled with a sigh of disenchantment.

The doubts and difficulties which the ministers felt in relation to the Faith and to their vocation were not felt lightly. Even ironic laughter was only this side of tears. Every man wanted that which he did not then know. He felt guilty over his predicament and yet his very guilt worked as a means of grace. Rather than driving him from Christ, it was leading him toward Christ. His resentments, questionings, denials, shame even to be in the group at first, were not signs that he did not care. They were indications that he cared very much indeed!

Uncertainty

Turning from the minister as a man of faith to the minister as the leader of a local congregation, what do we find? Any number of words stand out as expressing their experience: guilt, insecurity, hostility, fear, conflict, etc. For purposes of simplification we would single out the word "uncertainty" as the most characteristic of their feelings as leaders of congregations.

The uncertainty took various forms. To begin with, it was primarily felt in the difference between the congregation's expectations and the minister's. The difference applied both to the purpose of the church and to the purpose of the ministry. Take, for example, this conflict over the purpose of the church: One congregation was noted for its turkey dinners. To make them into profitable affairs it was decided to equip the kitchen more adequately than many restaurants. This itself required a parish-wide turkey dinner. The minister felt all this as a sheer waste of time during which the true function of the church was neglected. Yet how did the people react? At the close of the dinner held to equip the kitchen for more turkey dinners, they came to him with congratulations on the wonderfully significant thing the church was doing! Rather cynically he tagged his church as "The Christ Memorial Restaurant."

The above is only one of many examples in this clash of expectations, and if there is such a divergency over the nature of the church, it is little wonder that there is also conflict over the role of the minister. He is expected to be the guardian of the Faith. He is expected to be safe and orthodox, if not theologically, at least socially. He must not "rock the boat" by voicing doubts or criticisms of the accepted patterns of church or society. It was felt that frequently all people want in a minister is a status symbol for their own particular position in life. He is to be responsible for the life of the church — and only the church — because, after all, it was "his church." When things did not go well it was, too, "his fault."

But where in all this does a man draw the line between being responsible "to" rather than being responsible "for" a congregation? Is he to be a mere doormat for others? The group recognized that if a minister did permit himself to let others "dump" the entire responsibility on his shoulders, then he was doing a disservice both to his people and to himself. The anxiety over the tension of expectations had caused some men to organize congregational discussions on the real function of the church and the ministry. Being uncertain where they themselves stood and desperately wanting to find out, they would then attempt in such meetings to get others to be responsible for them. (Not all such discussions are primarily irresponsible in this way, and yet many can be just that.) Feeling sorry for himself, the minister tried to manipulate people into bolstering his sagging ego. One man even told his congregation that he was getting private therapy. Such a confidence was an attempt to get sympathy rather than to instruct them in the benefits of the mental health movement. In essence he was saying, "I am uncertain. See how weak and helpless I am. You can't expect anything from me."

Insecurity

At yet another level the minister, like everyone else, wanted desperately to be loved. Not being assured of himself in grace, there was then a continual drive to prove or justify himself. This insecurity created difficulties in seeing people and situations clearly. Indeed, encounters then turned into threats. As a result one man felt like a gladiator ready to do battle before every meeting. Another said he went to meetings as "one man against the rest." Because of this, calling within the parish was frequently avoided and casual comments were humorlessly transformed into critical rejection of the minister.

Perhaps this idling insecurity — ready to break out into the open at the slightest pretext — accounted for the hostility which appeared to be present between many ministers and the people in their congregations. Open antagonism was very rare and is frowned upon by society so that hostility is carefully disguised and rationalized. Hence, the following examples of the forms it did take: taking over responsibility that belonged to another; procrastination in calling on someone who had asked for help; loading committees with weak people so that the minister could control matters; championing the cause of the weak in order to cut down the strong; using sermons, especially "pro-

phetic" sermons, to give people a backhanded "slap in the face"; rigging financial campaigns to make sure their smooth execution was a "sock-cess"; being forever late to meetings; holing up in the study behind a stack of authoritative books.

Wedded to the feeling of wanting to be genuinely helpful was the plague of feeling constantly unable to be of real help. For example, a woman came to her minister to discuss the breakup of her marriage. After two hours she told him rather bitterly, "Well, I guess you can't do much about it. You haven't any answers for me." And he, quite perplexed, feebly replied, "I guess you're right." He went on to indicate to the group that according to all one read in psychology it was important for a person to listen so that as people came back to counsel they would begin to get insight for themselves. The only problem for him was that no one ever returned for a second counseling session!

The minister out of his own insecurity sometimes resented people "imposing on him." Yet he wanted to be helpful and was upset when no one called on him. Finally, though, there was this specter of knowing that his job was to help people grow into "the fullness of the stature of Christ," and the despair of finding himself unable to do that which he so desperately wanted to do.

Many times, however, behind an anxious and worried concern for others and the need to help lay the unvoiced cry of the minister's own heart for help. What looked like concern for others on closer examination proved more a concern for self. He himself was really uncertain. No wonder, then, the confusion and emptiness he felt in his vocation: the anxiety of "wearing out one's welcome," of having tried all the programs he knew, of having disappointed all who came for help. By transferring to another parish he could start with a clean slate. Failures and feelings could be left behind — the vain promise of every divorce! It would take the new congregation a while to catch on and in the interim his anxiety would be relatively quiescent. The only real problem with moving, however, was that he would meet the same kind of people. Nor would the new situation make a new person out of the same old parson.

Competition Within

The subtleties of the minister's relationship with his congregation are endless. We have seen in this brief survey that they are often characterized by a deep feeling of uncertainty on the part of the minister himself. His public self and his private self are in conflict with people who themselves are divided, and for want of a singleness in life and work he frequently lives out a life of "quiet desperation."

Closely allied to the preoccupations with difficulties in the congregation is the problem of relations with other ministers. Throughout these sessions there was expressed great dissatisfaction with existing clergy groups that gave little opportunity for meeting as persons. If any single word could characterize these relationships, it would be "artificiality" or quite possibly "rivalry." Competition for status went very deep. Whenever "two or three" clergymen gathered together, there seemed to be anxiety over "success." "Does he have a larger church than I do?" "I wonder what his salary is." "What are the statistics in the yearbook?" "Look at all he is doing!" "Do I dare trust him?" "How can I cut him down?" "Why do I feel so depressed, so discouraged?"

In one community the churches combined their resources to employ a week-day religious education instructor. Each church was given a quota on a pro rata base according to members and resources. Two churches contributed $350, a third $300, a fourth $100 and so on down the line. The minister of the largest church became chairman of a committee to reappraise the proper proportions. On the basis of the study his own church was raised to $530, the second's share to $500, and the third in size was increased only to $314. The minister of this third church felt threatened by the reappraisal. He had both resented and resisted being asked to send a statement listing the number of pupils in his church school, the budget of his church and his average Sunday attendance. What he dreaded was the revelation that his was the third largest church in town rather than the first. Although that fact was known, it did not lessen his feeling of having had his "face rubbed into the ground" by having the fact put down so openly. Such competitiveness accounted for the rather ruthless way in which ministers cut each other down.

Attack from Without

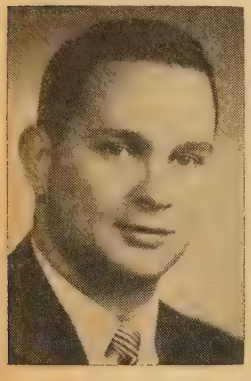
Attack from the outside on any particular clergyman was felt to be an attack on all clergymen. When anything unfavorable happened to one minister, it was taken to reflect on them all. And yet, on a deeper level, the identification was not simply out of fear. It was also an identification because of faith. In place of anxious laughter or cynical comments there would come a communion in silence, for on the deepest level they were standing together in Christ. There were moments, and they came with increasing frequency, when rivalry was conquered in the power of a common humanity in Christ Jesus and in a shared calling to be ministers of his gospel.

All that has been written above simply demonstrates what we already knew: namely, that the minister is a man among men. He carries within him all the wounds and scars of sinful, broken, human life. And yet, because of his vocational calling he feels the demand to be "more than himself." He cannot rest content with his estrange-

ment. God has placed His hand upon his shoulder and in longing he seeks to become worthy of that which has been entrusted to him.

Through encounter in the group each man began to realize that a good part of the problem he faced lay within himself. Previously he had not been able to get a hold of any thread to unravel these difficulties. He was largely a mystery to himself. Through honest discussion in a context of acceptance and judgment he became more aware of himself. He began to handle his own anxieties. He found increased confidence in his work. Conflict between his public self and his private self was less a source of fear. Gradually a new sense of harmony emerged. By conquering his insecure self he came to a deeper faith, grasped a single purpose in all that he was and did, and released the ever present power of God's reconciling love.

Toward the end of the first year there was genuine excitement as men who had come to these new depths of life even began to discover the integrity of that language of faith they had previously found so meaningless. And there was with some a realization that their entrance into the ministry carried with it a profound validity of which they themselves were unaware at the time but which now replaced mere old longing with real new affirmation.



The Ministry Is a Mutual Duty of Pastor and People

The Work of Ministry

By Mayo Yates Smith

IT IS a distinct honor and pleasure for me to participate in this service of ordination and installation. As your moderator for the past nine months I had some part in your search for a pastor, and I rejoice with you in this time of fulfillment and beginning. The ordination of a minister is one of the most significant events in the life of a church. For the minister it is a once-in-a-lifetime experience as by prayer and the traditional laying on of the hands he is set apart to the work of his calling. It is an unusual event for the particular church as well. Any given congregation can expect to be host to this kind of service only two or three times in a generation. In any church the event is sufficiently unusual to invite attention to the meaning of "the work of ministry." Let us now seek to discover what that meaning is.

"The work of ministry" is a lovely phrase, hallowed by centuries of Christian tradition. It appears only once in Scripture, in the fourth chapter of the Ephesian letter. Ephesians has been justly called "the crown and climax of Pauline theology." In this letter the themes that elsewhere appear in the writings of Paul are put together in a unified whole that is unmatched in any other book of the Bible. And Ephesians is pre-eminently a book about the church. It is here that the church as the Body of Christ receives its fullest treatment. It is here that the most striking statements about the unity of the church are made: the sevenfold unity of one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all. The church is a unity in which Jew and Gentile (the ancient symbols of the most complete separation possible to mankind) have been made one in the blood of Christ — a unity in which the dividing walls of hostility that split apart races and classes have been broken down, making one new man in Christ.

In the fourth chapter of this letter the fundamental unity of the church is related to the variety of talents and functions within the church. The Christ who descended from heaven to earth gave gifts to the church. "And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers. . . ." These various functions, as they are expressed in the abilities of individual persons within the Christian community, may, of course, in actual practice be the occasion for disunity as the force of envy is felt between those whose endowments are not equal. But this will not be the case when it is remembered

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This ordination sermon will have general interest and helpfulness; in addition it comes to our readers at a time when some of them will be engaged to preach about the work of the ministry or the responsibility of the church in the ordination of a minister. We submit the sermon, not as an invitation to wholesale cribbing, but with the suggestion that this is the way one man has addressed his message to a particular situation.

that each of these abilities is the gift of Christ, that Christ determined the measure of each gift and that the purpose of each is "the building up of the body of Christ."

The listing here — apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers — indicates that this letter was written fairly late, when distinct differences of individual ministry were recognized. There were no such clear-cut distinctions in the first days of the New Testament church. Only as the church grew older and as the organizational pattern began to be elaborated did they emerge. And even here the distinctions are by no means as sharp as they are today. The first two varieties of ministry here listed — apostles and prophets — in the context of this writing belong only to the first generation.

Strictly speaking, then, on the basis of this passage we may not refer to apostles and prophets among the ministry today. They were Christ's gifts to the church during the formative period only. In a more general sense we do regard ministers today as inheritors of the apostolic message; we do regard them as prophets in that they are called to proclaim "thus saith the Lord!" — to articulate the judgments of God upon the contemporary situation.

Evangelists, pastors and teachers, of course, refer to varieties of ministry that are certainly still with us. All the terms in this listing are descriptive of the work of ministry today. The minister is an apostle — if not in the technical sense, at least in the general sense of one who bears a message, a proclaimer of the gospel. He is a prophet — again, if not in the technical sense, at least in the sense of one who pronounces the judgment of God upon contemporary evils. He is an evangelist — a missionary who seeks to win persons to Christ. He is a pastor — a shepherd of souls. He is a teacher who interprets the faith to his people. He is also some things that are not listed in this passage. He is organizer, promoter, administrator. Too often he is general handyman, mimeograph-cranker and errand boy as well.

A Misinterpretation

How are these various distinctions of function related to "the work of ministry"? "And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the equipment of the saints, for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ." Here both the King James and the Revised Standard Versions of the Bible are in grievous error.

The Bible as originally written in Hebrew and Greek had no punctuation marks. Any punctuation that you see in your Bible simply represents the best judgment of the translators. They put in whatever they thought necessary to preserve in English the sense of the original. And here the translators seem to have made a very grave error. For if we simply leave the comma out, the meaning of the passage is drastically altered. It then becomes *for the equipment of the saints for the work of ministry*. That is, the purpose of these gifts — the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers — is to equip the saints for the exercise of ministry. "Saints" in the New Testament simply means "Christians," members of the church. *The purpose of the professional clergy, then, is to prepare the members for the work of ministry.*

This interpretation seems much more in harmony with the whole thrust of the passage. Four different commentaries agree that the comma should be left out. Moreover, several other translations agree. J. B. Phillips translates it like this:

> His gifts unto men were varied. Some he made Special Messengers, some prophets, some preachers of the Gospel; to some he gave the power to guide and teach his people. *His gifts were made that Christians might be properly equipped for their service. . . .*

Goodspeed puts it like this:

> in order to fit his people for the work of service. . . .

Weymouth says it this way:

> in order fully to equip his people for the work of serving for the building up of Christ's Body. . . .

But what does this word "ministry" mean? In the New Testament it emphatically does not mean the work of a special class of people. The word "ministry" is one English translation of the Greek *diakonia,* "service." *Diakonia* is the root of our English word "deacon." "Ministry" is literally "deaconing." You recall that the first deacons were elected for the purpose of waiting on tables to free the apostles for preaching. This was the special *ministry* of Philip and Stephen. The minister is one who serves, a service exemplified in the serving of tables and even more fully in Jesus' washing of the disciples' feet. All Christians are called to this service. The work of ministry is the work of the whole church. It is not the special responsibility of a special class.

This is simply another statement of the doctrine that the Protestant Reformers called "the priesthood of all believers." Every Christian is a priest. There is no special status before God that belongs to the professional clergy. And this is where the doctrine is so generally misunderstood: Every Christian is a priest not in the sense of being a solitary individual in his relationship to God, but in the sense of having a priestly responsibility for his fellow Christians. All of you are priests, pastors, ministers. All of you have the responsibility to serve as priests to your fellow Christians. It is the purpose of your elected pastor only to prepare you for this ministry.

What is the purpose of this total ministry of the whole church? "For building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; so

that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine. . . ." There are two main emphases here: unity in the church which is the Body of Christ, unity in faith and in knowledge; and maturity, spiritual maturity measured by the fullness of Christ and intellectual maturity that is impervious to every stray wind of doctrine. "Speaking the truth in love" is an important evidence of this kind of maturity. A community in which the truth is spoken in love is a community in which no one need pretend to be anything except that which he is. The body is built up as each member occupies his proper place and fulfills his peculiar function so that the whole body grows and upbuilds itself in love.

No Double Standard

The total picture here is that of a great fellowship of mutual love and concern in which each member has his own contribution to make and in which each is responsible for the others. This is the repudiation of any double standard of Christian discipleship. The ordained pastor is different from his members only in that his functions are different — that he is committed to the full-time care of the congregation and that he is a specialist in the doctrines of the church and in the interpretation of the Bible. His calling is no higher than yours. His responsibilities are no greater than yours. He is not paid to be good for you. There are no standards of Christian conduct that apply to him without also applying to you.

This sets a tremendous goal for every congregation. It means that the reality of the church's profession of discipleship depends upon its fellowship being characterized by a genuine spirit of Christian community, of co-operation, of mutual concern and love. Most of the troubles that individual churches have arise from their members' tendency to think of their church as just another organization. We think of the church as an organization that can hold our loyalty just so long as it continues to please us. As soon as something displeases us — we get rotated out of an office, some action of which we do not approve is taken, someone makes an ill-considered remark — as soon as this happens we pull out and have nothing further to do with the church until our ruffled feathers have been smoothed. I daresay that the history of any congregation would reveal an uncomfortable number of such instances. But when we react in this way, all our action proves is that we were never really members of the church in the first place. We were members only in the sense that we are members of any club. We were never really members of the great community of faith in which all are one in Christ and individually members one of another.

Your new pastor will officially begin his work of ministry here tonight. He has met the exacting requirements. But never forget that the work of ministry is not exclusively his work. The work of ministry is a work in which you all share. It is the service you perform as you demonstrate Christian love in your corporate life and as you witness to Christ in the pursuit of your daily activities. Your pastor can fulfill his ministry only as you are faithful to your ministry.

It is my prayer for you all that in the relationship that is to be established here tonight there may be a deep realization of this mutual responsibility, that pastor and people may jointly exercise the common ministry of Christ, to the end that this church may

> . . . grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love.

A Prayer

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father, graciously hearken to the prayers and petitions of thy children. Hide not thy face from us nor turn from our ways though we may have forsaken thee. Quicken every righteous impulse which we nourish in our hearts. Take away the desire to do good only for the sake of reward.

O Thou searcher of hearts, help us to be poor in spirit, to share sorrow, to be meek without hypocrisy, to hunger for truth, to show mercy to the merciless and to those who offend thy holy laws, to be peace loving, to dare to be sons of God, to be strong in time of personal or community disaster, to be glad and rejoice in the Lord in spite of evil influences which may be abroad.

Lord of truth, we do not pray for ourselves alone, but for those in our families and neighborhoods whom thou hast given us to love. Thou knowest everything which concerns them. Help us to believe that thou dost plan for them and us with infinite wisdom. May they be reconciled through our intercession. Grant relief to the poor and the oppressed. Gather the children of the world into thy tender keeping and protect them from harm. Speak to the heart of youth that it shall be free and fearless in dealing with a disillusioned world. Deal gently with those who are sick that they may not lose faith or hope. Comfort all who sorrow for loved ones. Breathe upon us all the benediction of thy peace. Our prayer is offered in the name of One who said: "Ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be made full." Amen.
— Herbert Beecher Hudnut, minister, Woodward Avenue Presbyterian Church, Detroit, Michigan.

The More Abundant Life

By Charles Iglehart

AS WE come to the close of this school year, and for some of you, of your educational preparation for active life, our thoughts are upon the future we shall be entering, and our adjustment to it. The pattern of our hopes is taking form. We are setting our aims. We are seeking clear goals. What shall these be?

Many voices will call us to fulfill acceptable ambitions: to get good jobs, then to rise by promotion to places of prestige and recognition. Some of us like to lead and power will challenge us. Others will readily turn to an easier life of pleasure, recreation and comfort.

But this university has from its beginning held before us, not the goal of an ample living either of wealth or of power, but of a well-developed personality capable of genuine adjustment to all the circumstances of life, and life abounding in inner resources and outward usefulness. Not a living but a life is our concern. Where do we find such a pattern more clearly represented than in Jesus Christ?

In the tenth chapter of St. John Jesus speaks of this kind of life. The metaphor is that of sheep, the sheepfold, the gateway into it and the shepherd standing by. He presents himself as both the doorway and the shepherd and promises this full and abundant life to those who wish it. Let us examine, therefore, what are his special characteristics for our direction today as we move on into the complex world before us.

I

Jesus loved and revered the natural world. Hillsides and meadows, mountains and sky, birds and flowers and animals had a significant place in his life. He often left behind him the bustle of the city and in solitude restored his serenity and poise by communion with the natural world. So far as we know he never hurt nor destroyed a living thing.

The world today desperately needs a return to this reverence for God's natural world. We are lavishly wasting on our own selves the resources stored in the earth for millenniums. We have rushed into blasting apart the atomic structure of our earth, scattering poison and threatening the imbalance of the created world. Like strutting little deities we are putting ourselves in the place of God, bending all creation to our own purposes and desires. Who will lead us back to a reverent use of what is ours? Only those who as lovers and artists can find abundant joy in nature. This is the first, basic level of the abundant life.

II

Jesus lived a life of detachment from material possessions. Far more than most of us, he knew a life of labor. He was undoubtedly the head of a household after Joseph's death. He had to earn his livelihood and pay his bills like the rest of us. But he knew the secret of mastering his possessions, few as they were, rather than be mastered by them.

Never in all history have material gains established such a tyranny over life as today. We call them our possessions, but really we are possessed by them. We create innumerable devices from tiny transistors to giant automation machines. Our purpose is to be freed from labor and to find through material comforts a larger life. Instead, we may easily become their slaves. In the mad pursuit of wealth with which to purchase things many a precious personality is buried under the burden of the struggle. Rightly used the miraculous mechanical tools of today may be our servants, but how many of us can find the strength permanently to remain free from their entanglements?

This does not mean that all of us can live the life of a Thoreau or a Tolstoy or a St. Francis of Assisi. Jesus did not desert life's responsibilities.

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Every minister, now or then, is invited to give a baccalaureate sermon. How shall he speak to the young men and women as they commence the new, big chapter in their lives? Is there a message which will call them to something more than thin morality and self-seeking prudence? In this blending of substance, simplicity and brevity Dr. Iglehart shows one way to speak to such an occasion.

He remained in the world of things but he was never enslaved by them. "Be not anxious," he said, "Life does not consist in the abundance of things that a man possesses." St. Paul described, rather, a life "possessing nothing, yet making others rich." To set this as our pattern may at future turning points in our life determine the entire course of our destiny.

III

Jesus was hospitable to new ideas. He did not hesitate to check tradition by his own experience and insights. Often he would say: "Ye have heard it said from of old . . . but I say unto you. . . ." Even the words of Moses and the other biblical writers were reinterpreted by him. He was true to his own convictions. But he did not close his mind to the ideas of others. He did not march under the banners of others but was rather a pioneer in thought and ideals.

Today we face a world with competing ideologies. The thinking of many people is stereotyped. They use labels instead of original ideas. It is the fashion to accept some fixed pattern of ideals, to "belong" to some school of thought, to bear a poster and walk in processions. Our world today is looking for men and women who will adventure in thought. It needs persons who will cross frontiers of hostile ideologies and find bridges of reconciliation. We need people who can find new light and new truth in unexpected sources. This means a more abundant life for all.

IV

To Jesus persons had a place of primary importance. He truly loved humanity. This was not merely a general spirit of amiability but was direct and personal affection for people as individuals. His interest crossed differences of class and rank, of age and sex and race, of culture and religion. He enjoyed people. He frequently visited in their homes and sat at their tables in fellowship. By contact with other persons his personality found refreshment, strength and joy. Fellowship, companionship, are unfailing sources of supply for an abundant life to anyone who will avail himself of them.

We who are graduating from this university may be tempted to withdraw from contacts with common people. We are already privileged by our higher education. We are likely to live in cities and move along one single stratum of life — the upper middle class, shall we say? How impoverished our life will be if we shut out all the working people and all the rural people as well as the poor, the handicapped or even the outcast who lurk in the darker corners of our modern society. Jesus gave himself in unstinting service to all such people because he loved them and cared for their welfare. Thus his own life was enriched.

Especially in cases of conflict, of misunderstanding and of hostility did he feel a mission to help. In his teachings Jesus gave a prominent place to his directions for his followers to resolve conflicts. By penitence of one's wrongdoing and by free forgiveness of others he showed the way to true reconciliation.

Our world today is on the verge of destruction because of a widening abyss of misunderstanding, hostility, fear and hate between our nations and peoples. Can anyone live an abundant life without facing this issue in his own heart? None of us may be influential enough to reshape the course of history, but at least we can set the compass of our own feelings and attitudes so that the poison of ill will or of unfair judgment of others shall not impoverish our lives.

V

Jesus recognized the Eternal God of all mankind as his Father and set his life in unchanging obedience to God's will. All else in life was secondary to this primary fact. Here was the source of strength and joy with which his life abounded. It gave meaning to all the common tasks. It shed radiance upon life's disappointments. It gave a sure sense of direction for every decision that had to be made. It was the link which held together his serenity and poise of character and a burning, fiery sense of commitment to bring God's righteous will into fulfillment among men.

Perhaps never before has mankind come so near to losing a sense of God's authority over life as today. This is not only in the sophisticated skepticism of intellectuals, but also in the avowed atheism of the massive political and economic revolution that is sweeping the earth, and still more important to us, the actual, if not theoretical, repudiation of God's overarching authority in our modern society.

National affairs and domestic policies show little if any awareness of the relevance of God or his holy will. Business and industry, education and research, the arts, literature and culture in general have thrown off the yoke even of what used to be called natural law, which is simply God's law. Modern society is emancipated and is threatened with the chaos of a state of affairs where there are no fixed standards, no code of ethics and no final authority.

In the smaller circles of our friends and acquaintances canons of courteous conduct may persist, and in the blessed seclusion of our own family life even an ethic of love will have its place. But all our larger relationships will have to be in a truly secular world, one concerned only with this life and its interests. There religion is purely a matter of individual taste, a subjective pleasure to be indulged in if one wishes. The sense of the God of creation and of history moving with us in our

world toward a purpose of his own for us all — this idea will scarcely be understood by our "enlightened" generation.

The result is that we have lost the genuine abundance of life which can be found only in Christ. Instead we have made idols of our group, our family, our nation, our profession or our own selfish desires, and the doom of all idolatries is descending on us. The only way through to real life is to take this God as our Father and live according to his purposes. To be sure, this may be costly. It was so in the life of Jesus. Indeed, it brought him death. But even in his death he possessed an abounding joy which he bequeathed to his followers.

This quality of abounding life is called by Jesus "Eternal Life." It is the kind of life which cannot perish and so is eternal in duration. But chiefly it is of such quality that even now one who enters it has come into an experience of triumph and victory over whatever life may bring of difficulty or trouble. It alone is the abundant life, and it may be entered if we will. For at the gateway stands One who lived it and who gave his life in order that whoever will might enter and find that life, abundant and eternal.

The Vicious Dualism: God in Religion But No Religion in Life

In Whose Image?

By Orva Lee Ice

RELIGION needs to break out into life; to be seen in other people than divines, saints and deacons; in other days than Sundays, Christmas and Easter; in other buildings than churches, cathedrals and synagogues. There needs to be an articulation of religion that applies not only to baptisms, sacred meals and holy orders, but to plumbing, carpenter work, store keeping, bus driving, manufacturing and the thousand daily tasks that make up man's work-a-day world. The fourth commandment is kept in this, that man remembers every day to keep it holy. The civilized world cannot exist six-sevenths secular and one-seventh sacred. From some ancient Latin who was nearer the truth of pure religion than he probably knew comes the dictum, "laborare est orare," to work is to pray. We seem to have buried that somewhere. Religion needs to resurrect or be permanently interred in the unholy sepulcher of irrelevance.

The laboring world is almost a closed shop to religion. The ethic of the factory and market place is exploitation. The predatory spirit dominates; to get by hook and crook; to put in as little as possible and take out all the traffic will bear. Pride is taken in chiseling, cheating and goldbricking, not in tasks well done, a product well made.

In the manufacturing world religion is all but locked out. The ethic of the mercantile fraternity is to produce for profit, not for service. Goods are made to sell, not to last. A recent cartoon presents the attitude of modern production. An agent is showing a new house to a man and wife, prospective buyers. It is leaning at a precarious angle. The buyer remonstrates that the house looks like it might soon fall down. But the realtor reassures him by saying: "It does lean a trifle, but wait till we get the paint and wallpaper on her and she'll stand up straight." Jerry-building in modern labor and industry is the forerunner of a tottering civilization. Unless it is to fall and crash to pieces, the whole of our industrial world will need to be redeemed from greed; and this, as we see it, is the task of religion, not only religion in red robes but religion in blue denim.

Until now the church has been aloof from the earthly. It has its sphere in the heavenly, having to do with the other world, with dying instead of living, with praying instead of working, with holy days like Lent and Sunday instead of the working days of Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, etc.; with wafers and wine instead of meat, bread and potatoes. We try to put the image of God on our religion and the image of the devil on our work. It is a vicious and destructive dualism.

Man was created to reveal the image of God.

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In simple, direct, Emersonian sentences this sermon fits its form to the theme and the mood of the message. No communicant goes away from the hearing of such a sermon saying, "What was he talking about?" It is intelligible not because the theme is trite — far from that — but because the preacher is resolved that his hearers shall know what he is talking about and be moved by that knowledge.

The minting of the metal of man's life must daily bear the image of his Creator. I bid you examine the coin of your own life and ask, "In Whose Image?"

Whose image is on your work? Doing your work as unto the Lord and not as unto man is not easy in this machine age. With mass production, assembly lines and high-pressure sales methods it is difficult to make men see the image of God in the work they do. Some vocations lend themselevs readily to the consideration that they are the calling of God: the ministry, teaching, healing. Other jobs like driving a truck, digging coal, pounding a typewriter, seem to belong to a world different from the realm of God. While it may seem impossible to think of your product as having anything to do with religious expression, you can do your work as though the Lord, not man, were your overseer.

Freeing God for Daily Tasks

Why should we feel that preaching is a work for God and not give this honor to building a house, selling insurance, farming? Is it not because we are cloistering God in churches, imprisoning him in stained-glass windows, mounting him like an icon on an altar, not letting him live in the daily tasks, that the world suffers and the Kingdom does not come? God in a carpenter shop is almost a contradiction in our modern mind. It was not so once! Until "they help everyone his neighbor, and everyone says to his brother, be of good courage, the carpenter encourages the goldsmith, and he that smooths with the hammer him that smites the anvil, saying of the soldering it is good," until the image of God is placed on our work, our religion is impotent.

In whose image is your play? We Americans do more playing than any other people. It is so easy to make it something very foreign to moral living; it is so easy to fall into questionable pleasures. Playing is not sinful. It can be a very moral and helpful thing. It can bear the image of God. Playthings such as cards, dancing, movies, are not evil of themselves. They can be wholesome, creative and saving, saving from tension, saving to relaxation. Play may occupy time that might be spent in the devil's workshop. It is not that we must play less, but that we must make our pleasures bear the image of moral worth.

Whose image is on your money? On the way it is made? On the way it is spent? In our hands it can be "filthy lucre" or "righteous mammon." If it is made dishonorably, by defrauding and cheating, by selling out other lives into debauchery or poverty, it is indeed filthy. If it is spent for selfish ends, it is unrighteously used. If it is won by honest labor, if it is used for service of goodness, beauty and truth it bears the image of God and builds the holy land.

The tithe is a recognition of our stewardship. The man who tithes is the cheerful giver. He always has money to give when needs arise. The tenth has already been set aside as belonging to God's work. When calls come for giving to causes that are righteous, he does not resent the appeal as though he were being robbed. He has laid by him in store. Nor is God being robbed. But using a tithe for philanthropy and the rest of our money in selfish ways is not building righteousness in ourselves or in the world.

Putting the image of God on the way we earn and use our money is a great step toward the Kingdom building. Conceive of how far the world is from the Kingdom now and how near it would be if all the money coming into the hands of God's people were earned honestly and righteously spent.

Does your home bear the image of the Eternal? Recently in a home I visited there hung on the wall at a tipsy angle the motto: "God is the head of this house, the unseen guest at every meal." The house was a litter as if the Helter Skelters lived there. When visitors come to visit you, does the home bear the image of cleanliness and godliness? So many homes are loveless and therefore godless because God is love. For most people homes are depots of departure. We eat and sleep there but there is no feel of rest and repose; no feeling that God is in the place and it is none other than the house of God and the gate of heaven.

The first province in the realm of God is the home. Failure here means failure everywhere. The home can be the very workshop of the Holy City. Into our children we must build the image of God. If ever the Kingdom comes it will come by building men of God out of boys and women of God out of girls, for "of such are the kingdom of heaven."

Counterfeit Religions

In whose image is your religion? So many religions have so much to do with God but God has so little to do with them. Like counterfeit coins they bear an image but there is no worth in them. They build division and hatred. They impute to the deity attitudes and actions that libel his name. They make God in the image of their own narrow, ugly selves. If earth were filled with their religion it would be empty of the spirit of God.

One of the stories that comes out of the witch-hunting days of our Puritan fathers illustrates how man can by his religion drive God out of his own world. A son who had been for many months away to sea and had left his widowed mother returned to find the village in an uproar. He inquired and found that the church elders were preparing to burn a witch. He found that the poor victim was his own mother. The holy mob asserted they were carrying out the Bible command, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live."

"How do you know she is a witch?" he asked.

"She gathers sticks on the Sabbath. She forages in the fields at night. She does not wait upon the holy day services."

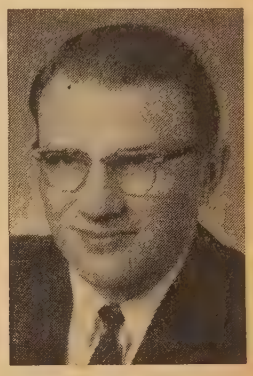
The young man stepped forward and put his arm around the poor woman.

"This is my mother. She was cold and she gathered fuel for her fireplace. She was hungry and she gleaned in the fields by night. She had no clothes to wear to church on the Lord's day. Is she of the devil because she was cold? Is she a witch because she was hungry and destitute? Are ye of God because you have murder in your hearts? Is God without love? I am the one responsible for her destitution and poverty. If you must serve God by burning, burn me!"

I think of that when I see religion that is heartless, that looses wild tongues of hatred. Whatsoever image is on your religion, you can be sure that it is not the image of God if it has not love and mercy. "He that loveth not knoweth not God for God is love."

Put the love of God in your heart. Then will your work, your play, your money, your home and your religion reflect like gold the divine image and God himself will live, move and have being among men.

Not Failure but Low Aim;
Old Theme — New Verdict



Bold Enough to Fail

By David B. Watermulder

But Peter followed him at a distance . . . a maid came up to him, and said, "You also were with Jesus the Galilean." But he denied it before them all, saying, "I do not know what you mean."
Matthew 26:58, 69, 70.

MORE than fifty years ago this advertisement appeared in the classified section of the *London Times:* "Men wanted. Major journey, long hours, challenging work, extreme danger. Possible fame. Reply box 118, The Times." The ad was placed by Ernest Shackleton who was seeking men to accompany him on his successful expedition to the Antarctic. While in this case it referred to a specific expedition, it could really refer to all of life. It might be pasted on every baby's crib as a job description of the journey ahead. When the human race loses the sense of adventure and the will to tackle the tough, then the human spirit has lost its reason for being.

The great moments in men's lives and in the history of the human race come when men and nations get out on a limb in the spirit of daring adventure. They may fail in their attempts but they succeed in expressing the creative spirit which God breathed into man. And while they may fail many times, their successes will outnumber their failures and progress is made. Great moments come when we are bold enough to fail. It is better to fail in a great cause than not to be involved in any cause at all.

Such a daring man was Peter. One of the reasons we admire him is that he was bold enough to fail. His personality provides us the same fascination we get in studying a mirror. There is no more human and alluring character in the whole Bible than Peter. Both weak and strong, vacillating and resolute, leader and center of controversy — we marvel that such a man could become so important to the cause of Christ and the Kingdom of God.

Our Scripture lesson catches Peter at his weakest moment. He openly denied his Lord and claimed no relation to him whatever. We know that story well and know how it prods us to remember the times when we have done the same. There was Jesus, led before the high priest and surrounded by the scowling mob. And there was Peter, following at a distance, claiming that he never knew the man.

The remorse of Peter and the forgiveness of Christ are essential elements in this story. Out of that repentance and forgiveness came one of the strongest men of the Scriptures and of the church. It was to him that Jesus said, "Feed my sheep." The Christ who had predicted that Peter would fail was confident that in this mission he would succeed.

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In the January 1960 issue of The Pulpit Dr. Watermulder wrote that parishioners have the right to expect their minister's sermons to be clear and orderly. Now he is subjecting one of his own sermons to his own prescribed test. In this, too, he would say that we must be bold enough to fail. We publish his sermon, however, in the confidence that he has succeeded.

There can be no question that Peter failed, and failed miserably. But there is more to be said. Even though Peter was a failure when he denied Christ at the trial, there is a vast difference between the deliberate and calculated betrayal by Judas and the momentary weakness displayed by Peter. Peter failed but he failed because he was trying to do right. He was at least in the courtyard. He did not mean to let his Lord down. He wanted to be there, standing with him. Of course he failed, but it is better to fail at a great cause than not to try at all.

I think this in one of the reasons we like Peter so much. He has so many of those earthy vitamins that prod men. We admire the man who is bold enough to fail.

If we admire this quality in a man, then let us recognize this second fact: Jesus Christ needs *more* Christians who are bold enough to fail.

Of course, I do not mean that men should deliberately fail in their work or deny their Lord. I do not mean that men should not draw on the tremendous resources of the Holy Spirit and exercise the abilities with which God has endowed them. I do mean that we need to be bold enough to stand up for Christ when he is on trial, knowing that we may momentarily fail. We will not always make the right decision any more than Peter did. We do not have such complete control over our personalities; but this we can do: We can be bold enough to stand for Christ, even when that stand may get us into trouble.

Who is the better Christian: the armchair quarterback Christian, who in his cautious and cushioned world utters words of righteous indignation and scorn for evil men, or the Christian who gets involved in politics, mixes in its dirty mire with its questionable colleagues and political compromises, and in a moment of unguarded weakness, fails his Lord completely?

When Failure Is Justified

It is not for us to judge. That is God's business, and he knows what the real motives and intentions are in the hearts of men. But if we are to be real disciples of Christ our Lord, it would seem that we would rather fail in attempting to do the right than succeed in doing nothing at all. As a minister of a church of Jesus Christ I would rather fail at any number of programs which seek to reach people and meet their needs than to succeed in keeping a calm, quiet, cushioned congregation at ease in Zion. I would rather invest in colossal endeavors and enterprises in the worst areas of our city to find in the end that we failed in doing what we should do as disciples of our Lord, than sit back and do nothing or not be on the scene where Christ is on trial.

No one wants to fail. Above all, we do not want to deny our Lord and when we do we must plead God's mercy. But we must face the fact that many of our sins of omission are as great as our sins of commission, and there are times when in the eyes of God it is better that we have failed him in trying to serve him than that we have remained untainted by the world because we have kept out of it altogether.

Dr. Ralph Sockman tells the story of a wife who thought her husband was being imposed upon at the office. Every day she warned him that he should not allow others to put their burdens on him. As regularly as she put a meal before him, she pressed this thought upon him. Soon he succumbed and felt that he was a fool to exert himself so much. Then, in a kind of mutual concern, he began to beg his wife not to tax herself too much in service to others. Thus the two people, husband and wife, babied and nursed each other into a soft selfishness which robbed them of the joy of living. What a contrast to that wife's weakening influence was the spirit of the wife of Wendell Phillips. She was an invalid; yet every night before Phillips went out to speak for slavery reforms which were so dear to his heart and so dangerous to his reputation, he would go to his wife's bedside. She would take his hand in both of hers and say, "Don't shilly shally tonight, Wendell!" What a fortifying power that kind of attitude can be to a person!

The Unpopularity of Action

Of course, this is not a popular philosophy today, nor is it particularly popular in some quarters of organized Christianity. The more secure we become and the more established our churches become, the more we tend to be on the side of those who want to do nothing. Though sons of revolutionary fathers and of a revolutionary faith, we become reactionaries. That is why it is most difficult for the successful and secure man to be a real Christian — so many of his vested interests, dear securities, and pet prejudices are at stake.

Roger Price, the humorist, describes the chief problem of our time as "Copelessness or the inability to cope." Its cause is civilization. His solution includes "the immediate incarceration of all scientists, explorers, politicians, lawyers, bill collectors, college professors, businessmen, small children, and others." The world, he says, needs a new philosophy based on a new ethic, "Avoidism." "Avoidism is a new optimistic philosophy designed to save modern man from himself. The principle of Avoidism is simple. An Avoidist simply avoids things. He avoids because non-avoiding leads to Involvement, and all of man's troubles grow out of Involvement." The book's title is apt: *In One Head and Out the Other, A Book for People Who Just Want to Lie Down.**

Dr. Edwin Dahlberg, president of the National Council of Churches, said that "too many of us have become fifth amendment Christians." We re-

* Price (New York: Ballantine Books, 1956). Used by permission.

fuse to witness to our Lord and decline to testify for Christ lest we incriminate ourselves and become too much involved with the Kingdom of God and the cross of Calvary. We need to witness for Christ on the local scene as we let our way of life become a contagious influence on the lives of others. We need to witness in our own city as we face realistically with some answers the tremendous problems of hatred and misunderstanding which are mounting between races. We need to witness as we declare that this world belongs to Christ and in his own day he will come to take it and judge it, and he has given us this day of grace in which to serve him. We need to witness for the freedom in Christ as we allow, without persecution, various groups and leaders to express opinions and attitudes which conflict with ours but which cause us to study our prejudices once more and see if they should be rearranged.

Christ the Source of Courage

Recognizing, then, that we admire the adventurous spirit which is bold enough to fail, and that Christ needs more Christians who have this spirit, we can bring the matter home by declaring a third fact: We can become bold enough to fail when our real commitment is to Jesus Christ.

In one of his sermons in the midst of the racial tensions in Montgomery, Alabama, Martin Luther King declared, "Always be sure that you struggle with Christian methods and Christian weapons. Never succumb to the temptation of being bitter. As you press on for justice, be sure to move with dignity and discipline, using only the weapon of love. Let no man pull you so low as to hate him. Always avoid violence. . . . I still believe that standing up for the truth of God is the greatest thing in the world. This is the end of life. The end of life is not to be happy. The end of life is not to achieve pleasure and avoid pain. The end of life is to do the will of God, come what may. I still believe that love is the most durable power in the world."

What white man in the country can display a higher quality of knowledge, Christian character, integrity and poise than this Negro leader? I suppose that Martin Luther King has made some mistakes along the line. I do not know what they are, but I cannot imagine a person being as embroiled in the crucial issues of our day without making a mistake sometime and denying his Lord. But thank God that Martin Luther King is bold enough to fail and would rather fail, seeking to witness for the Lord than succeed by staying away from the issue! Always, beyond our boldness and beyond our failures, is the mercy of God.

Do not forget the utter remorse that flooded over the soul of Peter. Never forget his tears, his disgust with himself. And never forget that in Christian experience great living begins with tears. It is God's starting point. When Peter broke down and wept, the pride which had made him deny his Lord was gone. He was casting himself on the mercy of his Lord. Even though he had meant well and tried hard, he did not bring these excuses to his Lord. He came simply pleading mercy, and he got it in abundance.

And so do we. Christ loved Peter, the Peter who made mistakes. And one of the reasons Christ loved him was *because* he made these mistakes in his effort to do right. That is what he is asking from us, that if we fail we fail after great effort for a great cause.

Look at that cross on which the Son of God died. Here was failure in the world's terms. Not the mistaken failure like Peter's, but the failure to succeed as the world understands success. Here God's sacrificial failure meets our mistaken failures and picks them up and redeems them, as he blots out the past and sets us on a new path, walking with him.

"Men wanted: Major journey, long hours, challenging work, extreme danger." If you want to apply, go to the feet of Jesus. If you want to qualify, go to the foot of the cross where he forgave sin and failure. And if you want to follow, begin by being bold as his disciple, bold enough to fail.

SERMONS IN THE NEWS

ON February 28th the Reverend Harry Gooch, assistant chaplain at West Point Military academy, preached a race relations sermon in the West Point chapel. Congressman Carl Vinson complained to Secretary of the Army Wilber M. Brucker that the sermon "degraded the social outlook of the south and went so far as to advocate mixed marriages between the races." Secretary Brucker, refusing to intervene, declared that "sermons delivered from the pulpit are left to the good judgment and religious conscience of the chaplains and are not reviewed in advance by higher authority." We vigorously applaud the refusal of the Secretary and of the commanders of West Point to "review or control the substance of sermons which are delivered by the chaplains." We suspect, however, that Mr. Gooch's sermon, a courageous treatment of controversial issues in their Christian context, *was* "reviewed in advance by a higher authority," higher than West Point, the Secretary of the Army or the government itself. All ministers might well ask whether they are continuously subjecting their preaching to the same kind of review.

Here Is a Man

By Markus Barth

FOR the writer of Psalm 16 it is enough to have one God. God *is* enough! So God is not his highest value standing on the top or in the midst of other values; but, "I have no good apart from thee."

To rely upon this God means to take social action. This man is delighted to be associated with the "saints in the land," with people despised as irrelevant, outmoded, the hillbillies of the time. He shuns the company and the works of the prominent whose names are on everyone's lips. He is convinced that they inherit nothing but troubles. The multiplicity of their sorrows he traces back to their multiple allegiances.

But more interesting than all human troubles is God himself. The man who wrote this psalm goes far in his metaphors. He calls God his favorite dish and his preferred drink. But more than that, he says of God: "Thou holdest my lot." To this extremely useful God he owes a beautiful estate metered out with most comprehending care and most pleasant results. "The [measuring] lines have fallen for me in pleasant places." This the man can really enjoy. For no mortgage payments gnaw away at his income; the place simply fell to him as an "inheritance." How worldly this man is, and even more, how cheerfully and triumphantly he speaks about what pleases him! Which trouble-loaded suburbanite, which cave-, slum- and camp-dweller, which dormitory resident would not envy him!

But possessions and delights may prove worthless unless there is wisdom to use and to enjoy them. So the man praises God also for learning and skill received by day and for ideas dawning to him at night. Obviously this man also learns and thinks; he does not merely eat and look out of the window. He knows that he must have a stronger and better person always within reach and a legal counselor for a friend. Without someone to look up to, to trust and to follow, he would feel shaky and might stumble in his decisions and actions.

For him soul and heart do not fall apart, and body and soul are not so split that one is doomed to hell while the other escapes into heaven. Instead, here is wholeness. "My *heart* is glad, my *soul* rejoices, my *body* dwells secure." So heart, soul and body live in beautiful concord. As a personality fully integrated in all God was, is and will be for him, he can face squarely whatever comes to him. Even death and the pit! Why hide or run away from the fact that there is death. The man is unafraid. God is such, he says, that he "does not give me up, or leave me to the pit." If we like it, we may take it from this man that wholeness of life, of soul and body can be found only when in regard to death we are uncompromising realists. Who is a realist? The answer given by this psalm is plain. It is the man who faces death with the conviction that God is stronger than death. God did not create man to be trapped by death.

The man's prayer ends with a triumphant ring. Walking on earth means following a narrow path rather than bumping along Broadway. God does not only *show* him the way; he is *present* with him on that path. Though it be steep, narrow, lonely, the man yet walks on it like a child led at the father's right hand. What new delight the child finds in that company! Whether they walk by day or by night — "in thy right hand are pleasures for ever more."

We observe that all the man says about himself is connected to and dependent on an act or attribute of God. If you asked the man to speak just for a little while merely of himself without mentioning God, he would probably be silent and embarrassed. To speak of life — this for him is to

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Expositional preaching always runs the risk of becoming pedantic. This sermonic exposition of Psalm 16 escapes that peril; instead of expounding verse on verse, the author gives us in bold and striking lines a portrait of the psalmist. As line complements line we see God's man emerging on the canvas. (The above sermon appears here in an abridged form.)

speak of *God and man.* And it means to speak of them as friends. He is convinced that God cares, that he cares for man so much as to form a mighty fortress in which man may take refuge. God cares so much that he is man's defender in turbulent times, the pathfinder and guide at the rim of a pit deeper than the Grand Canyon.

God and man are not only related, they are together. What happens between them — this is life. Through God's goodness, man's life is made not only bearable but enjoyable. Man's eyes are opened for the miraculous daily preservation and his lips for thanks and praise. The man's words make sense; if there is a living God, and if there is reason to say he is for, not against, man, then man can be thankful even in the face of death.

We observe that the man not only makes skilled use of poetic metaphors, but that he also shows a heavy inclination to overstatement. Can any honest soul be happy in material and spiritual delights at the same time? Can you look down into an abyss, and yet feel and be completely secure? Is it not more honest when man curses the day of his birth or cries out that he is Godforsaken?

Indeed, not everyone speaks as this happy man. Tracing his identity, his place, his time, his actual condition in life may always remain an unsolved problem. Where is this man hiding? Where is he in Israel's history, in church or in world history, or among us?

A Man of Extremes

Here is the answer: Like many another Israelite who prayed out of the depth of misery or out of abounding joy, this man calls his prayer a psalm "of David." The reason for this title is easily given: David was a man who always lived at the extremes. Stinking shepherd boy and glorious king; a dog and a hero; haunted by men before and after his ascent to the throne, and yet miraculously preserved; a sinner, and yet declared faithful and righteous. Under the name of David there is hidden both the extreme misery and extreme joy of human life; and under the same representative name an Israelite felt understood, included, safe. So when he prayed to God, he often remembered David as the true type of all suffering and all blessings, and he poured out his woes and his hopes in the manner of David. God's man, they knew, has reason to be hopeful and cheerful. God's man is not a fiction or a dream. He has lived. His name is David.

But this does not yet explain all that is surprising in Psalm 16. A sharper, better interpretation is required and in the Acts of the Apostles both Peter and Paul have given it. They admit frankly that at least a part of Psalm 16 fails to make sense even when they think of David the king. They find the evidence for God's everlasting protection of man and for redemption from all evil in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. So argue the apostles; and it may be profitable to learn from them that all that Psalm 16 says about friendship and the union of God and man would look like fancy poetry, wishful make-believe, or simply like trash if there had been no Jesus Christ and no resurrection.

Aimed at the Resurrection

Our third observation therefore is this: Psalm 16 makes sense when we do not take it for an unwarranted call to the optimism of the Epicurean, but when it makes us look at Jesus Christ. No less an event than his resurrection stands at the end of the lines which are here drawn. If you deny that it is God's will and power to raise the dead, then you have a logical basis to doubt the contents of this psalm! Without resurrection the whole Bible makes no sense. The man who prays to God and who becomes his witness before men stands and falls with the Resurrection.

Now the author of this psalm did not foresee what happened at Easter. But since we live after the Resurrection we cannot interpret the psalm without some reference to it. The joy of this psalm is vindicated by the resurrection of the "Son of David," even Jesus Christ. By God's grace there *is* a man who is redeemed from the deepest pit and Godforsakenness. His name is Jesus Christ. If we are called "Christians" after his name, then this very nomenclature implies that we know that that man is not alone. He is certainly unique; but he is not a man for himself. He is *our* man.

In our present world a voice like that of Psalm 16 makes little noise. There is a ghost which in our time makes much deeper impressions. This ghost is more poisonous than strontium 90; its character is at least as real as that of the ghost mentioned in the Communist Manifesto; its power is more contaminating and lasting than mass hysteria; and its victims are more numerous than those of two world wars. Its name is "Glorified Self-pity," "Systematized Malaise" or "Existentialism."

Certain it is that modern man is not aware of that unity of body and soul, of material and spiritual blessings, of man and God which is sung in Psalm 16. On the contrary, ours is a garbage-pail view of life. Ours is a Broadway civilization in which only a few exceptional people — among them probably more non-Christian than church members — dare seek and pursue narrow pathways. And ours is a church that has made peace with death; for it has become a sort of funeral business for the preservation and memorial of human and spiritual corpses rather than a joyful crowd gathering and going out to praise the Lord in public acts of unselfish testimony. In short, wherever you look, the reality of our days seems to stand directly opposite all that Psalm 16 is saying.

We had better blame ourselves for this miserable state of affairs. The message of Psalm 16 calls all of us to repentance. It does so, not by statistical-

ly cataloguing the vices and miseries of our era, but much more incisively by speaking of the abounding grace of God, of the presence of the Lord at the side of those walking on a lonely path near the pit. This is the method of true preachers of repentance. Jeremiah, John the Baptist, Jesus, Peter told the proud or complaining, self-assured or dissatisfied, frivolous or gloomy people of their times that God is near, that God is good, that God sets his pride in strengthening the weak, in gathering the dispersed, in freeing the captives, yea, in raising the dead. Not contrition for its own sake, but the return to the good Lord was the heart of the repentance to which they called. "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand." In a similar manner, the words of Psalm 16 call a generation of angry young people to repentance, not by adding bitter words to those already spoken but by singing the praise of the good and present Lord. Psalm 16 drives us to repentance.

What, then, shall we do? Many of us indulge, in despair or in pride, in the statement: "I am ultimately and utterly alone, left but to myself and the whims of good or bad luck." Such statements are simply not true and must not occupy our mind or pass through our lips. If they were true, we should have to rely on our own attempts to lift ourselves by our bootstraps to higher levels of being, to keep in balance like a ropedancer, or to dig ourselves ever deeper into the mire that surrounds us. Such diagnoses of man and the corresponding cures are not dependable; they are simply lies and nonsense, worse than error!

Assured of His Presence

Man is not left to himself! Here is the man Jesus Christ. Here is a cloud of witnesses. Here is the singer of Psalm 16. Each one of them knows better. God is with man and this pertains not only to "the good guys" but equally and all the more to those tempted by, trapped in, or punished for sin. God is for the man at the rim and in the depth of the pit. What we need is courage to seek, to acknowledge and to confess the presence of God. This would be faith!

But where shall I find faith? You may have explored in your heart and you found it empty or full of evil. You looked into books and found that some are dull and some exciting. But again God was not there. You thought for a time you had perhaps seen a trace of him in mother's or the sweetheart's smile. The man who wrote this psalm is less romantic. He found God at work in all he ate and drank, in his studies and in his walks. This is the way to become sure of God and to get out of the self-pitying lone-wolf attitude. Put before God what little or much you know of him. Take a stand for your small or big conviction before others. Make an end to that silly love for your own unbelovedness and an end to the hunt for a private happiness. Prayer and testimony are the alternative to our sourfaced, private Christianity.

It is not enough to think or to say, "I am against sin." Works of repentance are inseparable from the fear of God. We have read: "Libations of blood I will not pour out." This sentence may refer to blood offerings to Moloch or any deity of Canaan. Corresponding modern deities are racial segregation, nationalism, imperialism. Of course, we dissociate ourselves readily from blood offerings brought to the altars of such gods. We will indeed have no part in them. But what about Dresden, Hiroshima, the H-bomb tests? It is no excuse to say everybody does such things; they are necessary; they keep the balance straight and are therefore opportune. No doubt, on the broad ways of trivial and trite thinking such offerings are respectable, excused, even fashionable; but not so on the steep and narrow "path of life" which we are to find and to follow! It is the duty not of a few Quakers, scientists and sandal-and-beard-wearing students only but of everyone who loves and fears God to take a public stand against preparation for war. It is God himself who makes his chosen ones swim against the stream. The man who dissociates himself from the idol-worshipers and their offerings — he alone will *enjoy* food, drink and a goodly lot. He is unafraid even of death. He is never alone: God is with him. We should share in his stand, his privilege, his joy. Unless we begin to take committing and daring steps, we do not repent and we fail to appreciate the nearness and goodness of God.

So I call to you in the midst of the hot pursuit in which you are engaged to be of good spirit and to be thankful for all that you receive! More often than not you feel as walkers or stragglers on the brink of an abyss or you sense the clutches of some sort of hell. Never mind! God is ever present. His own Son was truly Godforsaken, and yet not left in the pit. Better with Christ in hell than without him in a self-made heaven! For this Man was raised from the dead. So we have a concrete example and good reason to confess that "God does not give me up to Sheol." This trust is the basic fruit of that repentance to which Psalm 16 is calling. Here is a man who has something to say: "Watch out; stand firm in faith; be men; be strong."

PENTECOST RETURNED

SEEK not only in history's pages
for its evidence, but know
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its deep-searing, inward glow
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moves other men,
We, too, may share in Pentecost
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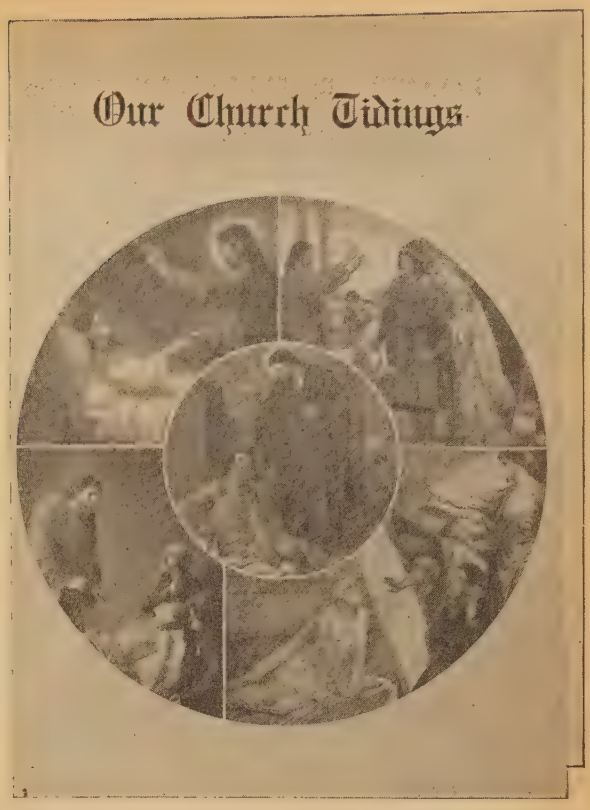

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Pulpit Communication

By Harold E. Buell

PREACHING, said Dean Inge, is like throwing a bucket of water over a row of bottles with narrow necks. A few drops might find their way into the bottles, but most of the bucketful will go to waste. Others have likened parishioners to the fish who heard the preaching of St. Anthony:

> The sermon now ended,
> Each turned and descended.
> The pikes went on stealing.
> The eels went on eeling.
> Much delighted were they,
> But preferred the old way.

Yet sermons can and have accomplished results. A sermon by Stephen before his stoning helped win the Apostle Paul to the Christian way. Sermons started Northwestern University and the Armour Institute of Technology. A sermon by Moody sent Wilfred Grenfell to Labrador. A sermon by Eliphalet Nott, preached in Albany, New York, after Aaron Burr had shot Alexander Hamilton, put an end to dueling in America. Even in an age of radio, television and motion pictures, preaching is not outmoded. In fact, more people belong to churches and attend church than ever before in the history of the nation. But there is some reason to doubt that preaching is getting the results it did in previous generations. The following suggestions for remedying this situation are not necessarily new and different, nor are they complete. But some re-emphasis is useful from time to time, especially for those of us who are so busy doing the job that we may forget the best techniques. Some of us even need to be reminded that our speaking should be judged for its effectiveness as *communication*.

Dr. Halford E. Luccock lists several types of superficial, and thus ineffective, preaching. There is what he calls the Smorgasbord sermon: "a little of everything and nothing very solid." He speaks also of the Confectioner's sermon, "like a wedding cake with candy chateau, gardens of angelica and hearts of purest whipped cream; sweet but not much nourishment." Then there is his Jericho sermon, "in which preachers have implicit faith that if they march around the outside of a subject seven times, making a loud noise, the walls will fall down."* Few will argue that such sermons get results.

While the content of religion does not essentially change, the most effective form of presentation may change from generation to generation. Alvan A. Sarra, a Washington advertising executive, was taking a modern view of modern people when he said, "Religion is the greatest product anyone ever tried to sell; all it needs is proper advertising and attractive merchandising." The temptation of the minister is to stick to the conventional forms of preaching. He may feel that there is something sacrilegious about departing from the expository or textual sermon, or he may have been trained to preach topical sermons and hesitates to try a new approach. His concern should not be whether the form of the sermon is conventional, but whether he is getting the message across.

What is the preacher's purpose in preaching? A sermon may seek (1) to educate, (2) to evangelize or convert, (3) to stir to action, or (4) to help create a worship experience. A single sermon may try to fulfill one or more of these objectives. The preacher must constantly ask himself what he is trying to do and whether or not his forms and techniques of preaching are producing the desired results.

If a sermon is to achieve its purposes, it must be *simple*. The preacher as well as the politician should avoid what Maury Maverick has called "gobbledygook." You will recall "gobbledygook" as the word he coined to describe the language he heard at a Congressional committee meeting just before Pearl Harbor. The chairman of this committee spoke at length of "maladjustments co-extensive with problem areas . . . alternative but nevertheless meaningful minimae . . . utilization of factors which in a dynamic democracy can be channelized into both quantitative and qualitative phases. . . ." Such pompous and noncommunicative language as this can be heard from many a pulpit as well as from the political platform.

Both politicians and preachers can profit by remembering the laconic Calvin Coolidge, who never used four words when three would suffice. While serving as a Massachusetts state senator, Coolidge made what is probably the shortest speech ever uttered in a state legislature. A legislator opposing a Coolidge measure made a lengthy oration, beginning each paragraph with the words, "This bill is . . . ." When the speaker had finished, Coolidge rose and quietly said, "Gentlemen, it isn't." He sat down, and was overwhelmingly endorsed in a quick vote.

Simplicity a Requisite

The business man and the advertiser know the importance of simplicity in communicating with the potential buyer. The preacher, too, must learn brevity and simplicity if he would communicate successfully to the pew. Many preachers, overestimating the educational background of their hearers, deliver sermonic essays which would be intelligible only to college or seminary philosophy classes. A young minister of a certain small church who felt that his preaching was ineffective, investigated the schooling of his congregation, their reading habits and their intellectual interests. He discovered that less than one in five had been graduated from high school and that only one had finished college. Fewer than one in three ever read religious literature of any kind aside from the Sunday school les-

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HAROLD E. BUELL, *pastor of White Temple Methodist Church, Miami, Florida, has held pastorates in the Pittsburgh and Florida Conferences of the Methodist Church, coming to Miami from St. Petersburg. He graduated from California State Teachers College, Boston University School of Theology and the University of Pittsburgh where he received the Ph.D. degree. Dr. Buell has traveled widely in Europe, Asia and South America, serving as a short-term teacher in India and as an exchange preacher in London.*

Out of numerous possibilities Dr. Buell suggests three requirements for effective pulpit communication. It would be interesting to know whether or not our readers agree with his selections.

* Halford E. Luccock, *Communicating the Gospel* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953). Used by permission.

sons. A surprising number did not even read the daily papers. He completely revised his approach to preaching, speaking more simply and with words that carried meaning to his kind of congregation.

Several years ago a clergyman who felt that he was not a good preacher moved from a town parish to a country village inhabited entirely by farmers and farm laborers. He began to study the language habits of his new parishioners, noting down the words he actually heard them use, until he had a collection of about three hundred words. Then in preparing his weekly sermon he would try to use the language of the people to whom he was speaking, avoiding words he knew were not part of their vocabularies. A few months later there was standing room only in that church. It was crowded with people who came to listen to the "parson who talked sense."

If he would be effective in pulpit communication, the preacher, besides using simple language, must be *interesting*. He has the most interesting subjects in the world — the relationship of man to God and of man to man — and it is his task to present these subjects interestingly. This requires careful preparation. Some pulpiteers prefer the inspiration of the "Spirit," believing that God will put into their mouths the proper words at the proper time. Once, when the German minister Klaus Harms was visiting a conference, one of his fellow ministers said, "I personally never prepare my sermons because I am totally sure of my Lord and Savior and of the Holy Spirit and I know that the words will be given me according to the promise." Dr. Harms replied, "I am seventy-five years old and I have preached for fifty years, but I must confess that all the time I stood in the pulpit not on one single occasion has the Holy Spirit spoken to me one single word. That is, except once. But he spoke to me often as I left the pulpit, and what he said was, 'Klaus, you have been lazy.'" Perspiration must mix with inspiration to produce an effective and interesting sermon.

Zeal for the Message

If pulpit communication is to be effective, the preacher must be *sincere*. The message of the preacher must come out of a deep personal experience with the thing about which he is speaking. John Wesley, when asked how he went about preaching, answered, "I set myself on fire, and the people come to see me burn." A preacher on fire with zeal for the message he is proclaiming will be effectively heard.

A young preacher, visiting the church in Dundee, Scotland, where Robert Murray McShane had preached, once asked the sexton, "How did he prepare his sermons that so melted and moved the people to God?" The sexton took the visitor into the famous preacher's study and motioned to the desk and chair. "Sit down there," he said. "Put your head in your hands. Now, let the tears flow. That's how he did it." Unless a preacher's message moves him, he cannot expect it to move others. Insincerity is readily detectable.

The demand of the man in the pew is for a sincere, interesting, simple presentation of the gospel. He is not interested in "rhetoric" or philosophical speculation. I have heard the story of a brilliant young preacher who went to his first church full of pride in his degrees and in his forensic skills. His parishioners, too, were at first impressed with their flashy new preacher. But they soon realized they were missing something. One Sunday morning when the young man entered his pulpit, crammed with his reason and his rhetoric, he saw a note pinned on the pulpit, facing him as he sat on the platform. It said, "Sir, we would see Jesus." All that week the minister thought about the thirst of the congregation for a sincere and simple presentation of his convictions, and the next Sunday he was a transformed preacher. His sermons became simple, interesting and sincere. Several Sundays later he found another note pinned to the pulpit. It said, "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord."

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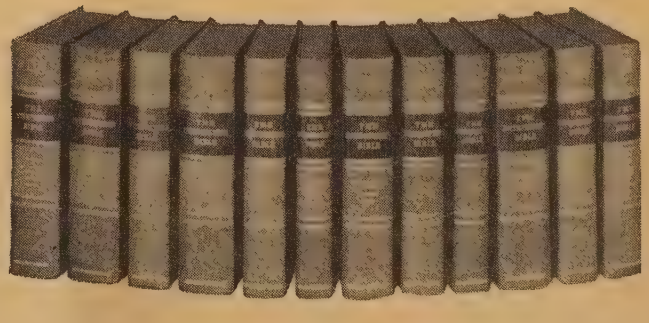

Abingdon Press

Ordinary Life Insurance—

MUST YOU DIE TO BEAT IT?

by Andrew Hobart
President,
Ministers Life & Casualty Union

DEATH is an unpopular prospect.

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Book Reviews

THE LETTERS TO THE GALATIANS AND EPHESIANS. *By William Barclay. Westminster. $2.50.*

HOSEA, JOEL, AMOS, OBADIAH, JONAH. *By Jacob M. Myers. John Knox. $2.00.*

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE. *By Donald G. Miller. John Knox. $2.00.*

INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE. *By Kenneth J. Forman, Balmer H. Kelly, Arnold B. Rhodes, Bruce M. Metzger and Donald Miller. John Knox. $2.00.*

THE last fifteen years in biblical studies is characterized as a period in which excellent atlases, commentaries, concordances and pictorial books on the Bible have been published; it is also a time in which many writers have pointed their idiom and concepts toward the laymen's reading interest. Was there ever such an era which might be called "A Resurgence of Interest in the Study of the Bible"! The four books in this review are excellent examples of commentaries focused for the layman who wishes to know the Bible. All are clearly written by recognized scholars; the best of biblical scholarship is correlated in the expositions without involvement in problems meant only for the technical scholar. Each of the three commentaries on books of the Bible follows the regular format of first discussing the author, date, purpose and general introductory problems, followed by a section-by-section commentary on the verses, with a fine interlocking of exegesis and exposition. The layman's interest and the scholar's respect for these volumes will credit both sets as of real worth.

Introduction to the Bible introduces the twenty-five volumes under the general title "The Laymen's Bible Commentary," the other twenty-four volumes in this set dealing with all the books of the Bible. This introductory volume deals with the topics: "What Is the Bible?" "The History of the People of God," "The Message of the Bible," "How We Got the Bible," "How to Study the Bible." The general approach to these basic themes is a constructive critical position. Balmer H. Kelly is the editor of the series, assisted by Donald G. Miller, Arnold B. Rhodes, and Dwight M. Palmers. The commentaries on Luke and on the five Old Testament books are a part of this series.

The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians composes one of the commentaries on the New Testament entitled "The Daily Study Bible Series." William Barclay of Glasgow, who writes this commentary and is the editor of this series, stands out as one of the most skillful scholars in adapting biblical scholarship to the layman's understanding.

For study groups, for church libraries and for all individuals interested in Bible study which integrates sound scholarship with a plain readableness, these volumes are highly recommended. The format of a pocket-size edition plus the low cost add to their desirability. — *Thomas S. Kepler, Graduate School of Theology, Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio.*

LIVE TODAY. *By Reuben K. Youngdahl. Augustana. $3.00.*

I APPROACHED this book with caution because one of my pet peeves is the frothy, smooth "devotionals" so widely published urging "be nice to God and he will be nice to you."

Live Today is a far cry from such chaff. Dr. Youngdahl takes his message from everyday life and with creative use of illustrations (avoiding the plague of overused ones) stabs the mind awake. The daily meditations abound in themes that cry out for expansion.

If, as suggested in the preface, he intends these meditations as an introduction to a larger prayer — "that is why," he says, "I have not written an Amen to any of them" — then he has succeeded wonderfully. This reviewer can only add "Amen." — *William D. Byrd, First Methodist Church, Pine Bluff, Ark.*

PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION. *By Paul E. Johnson. Abingdon. $5.00.*

THIS edition is a revised and enlarged copy of a book by the same title and author which was well received in 1945. Dr. Johnson is professor of psychology and pastoral counseling at Boston University School of Theology. Everyone who has an interest in religion will find interest in this book. The author discusses psychological theory, religious experience and growth, devotional practice, beliefs, behavior, health and finally the church.

Here is an excellent study of the science of human behavior and experience as they relate to religion. The great religions are explored and the great minds are probed, especially the mind of Jesus who revealed the heart of religion as the inner spirit of man. The author writes with the genius of the critic and seems to have at his finger tips the basic contributions of philosophers, scientists and psychologists. He describes the methods used

to secure psychological data — the questioner, face-to-face interviews, the laboratory, statistical tables, charts, tests, hypnosis — and yet is fully aware that most of the mystery of religion will remain beyond our grasp.

He claims with William James that the original experience must be studied and is discovered in those "individuals for whom religion exists — not as a dull habit, but as an acute fever." He considers the contemporary psychologies of religion from Freud to Boisen. His definition of religion is "personal devotion to ultimate Being, Who is believed to offer creative potentialities for human life through enlarging relationships." — *Herbert Beecher Hudnut, Woodward Avenue Presbyterian Church, Detroit, Mich.*

How to Serve God in a Marxist Land. *By Karl Barth and Johannes Hamel. Association. $2.50.*

ONE might regard the subject of this book as interesting but not essential reading. The fact that we do not live in a Marxist land may lead some to by-pass it for more relevant studies. Those who do will cheat themselves. The book is strangely pertinent and compelling.

For one thing, the testimonies of Barth and Hamel are in themselves exciting. These two men are not "armchair analysts" speculating about a curious little problem in Christendom. In different ways, they speak from the vantage point of personal involvement. Barth has lived in a land subjected to a dictator and in more recent years has been a counselor for others living under a regime hostile to the Christian faith. Hamel is currently a pastor in the Eastern Zone of Germany. In dramatic but not emotional terms they confront us with the tensions of Christians who need our concern, action and prayers.

Secondly, Barth's article involves Western Christians in the dilemma. The problem he poses is not merely that of serving God in a Marxist land, but of serving God in the Western world. Barth will allow capitalism and democracy no measure of saintliness. Though we may take offense at his identity of the American way of life with the "fleshpots of Egypt," there is a prophetic word here which needs to fall upon our ears. This titanic and controversial theologian will not grant us the luxury of dealing solely with the "communist problem." Refusing to side with America and her allies, he forces us under the judgment of God.

But the point at which the work is most significant is this: the methodology of the authors. We find here a theologian and a pastor wrestling with contemporary issues in the light of Scripture. Against the background of what God has said and done in the past, they are trying to understand what he is saying and doing now. To the best of their ability, they take their orders and receive their light from the Word of God revealed in Scripture. Their ways of dealing with contemporary problems are not a curious mixture of common sense, pragmatism and compromise. Living on the frontiers of the church and studying their Bibles, they listen passionately for the "voice of God." Those of us in pulpits today would do well to ask ourselves if we are as faithful to our calling!

Though one may not agree with what he finds in this brief document, no one can fail to profit from entering into a conversation with a strenuous theologian and a faithful pastor. Incidentally, the Introduction by Robert McAfee Brown is in itself worth the price of the book. — *David O. Woodyard, University of Connecticut, Storrs, Conn.*

Footprints of a Dream. *By Howard Thurman. Harper. $3.00.*

THE Church of the Fellowship of All Peoples in San Francisco is most fortunate to have its story told by Howard Thurman. This church is another institution which is the lengthened shadow of a man who here tells us something of his background as the introduction to the story of the church which grew from infancy to mature stature under his leadership.

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the people. Drama, music, interpretive dancing, periods of silent meditation, summer camps and many other features enliven the pattern of church life.

The Presbyterian Church gave financial support to the experiment. Because of the separation of the church from denominationalism, Howard Thurman has found many friends who give moral and financial support to the church as members-at-large.

This pioneer stage has passed and Howard Thurman is now Chaplain of Marsh Chapel at Boston University. The church is now self-supporting and is going forward with strength under the ministry of Francis Geddes. The author makes it clear that Fellowship Church will not serve as a guide for integration of existing churches. It will show that people who start with the desire to establish an integrated church can, by the grace of God and the devotion of man, succeed in the enterprise. — *Vere V. Loper, First Congregational Church, Berkeley, Calif.*

CHRISTIANS ALIVE. *By Bryan Green. Scribners. $2.95.*

BASIL Matthews, writing several years ago under the title *Wanted — A Christian Army,* said that there were plenty of books about the meaning of Christianity for highbrows and mezzo-brows but writers were badly needed who could pass on these same truths convincingly to a much wider public. Otherwise we might find that we had officers and sergeants and corporals ready for the Christian conflict but no army.

Times are urgent. The conflict has reached a vital stage, reinforcements were never more needed. This is not the moment for saying your religion is a thing you keep to yourself; it is the moment for sharing it for whatever it is worth, freely and fully.

That is the fairly obvious reason for this book from Canon Bryan Green's facile pen. It should prove to be a worthwhile work by gaining many more recruits for the Christian army or even starting some of them to inquire about the conditions of service.

Many people today think they can live quite decently and well without any religion and that Christians on the whole are not much better than pagans. The purpose of Canon Green's book is to set forth in simple terms and from the angle of an ordinary lay person the truth that without the Christian faith life is empty, lonely and purposeless.

Here is the work of no urbane religious philosopher but of an ecclesiastical evangelist who actually believes that evangelism is the business of everybody in the church from the acolyte up to the archbishop. Parsons all over America will do well to persuade their parishioners to peruse this tiny, timely tome. — *Johnstone G. Patrick, First Presbyterian Church, Sayre, Pa.*

THE ROAD TO CONFIDENCE. *By Stuart E. Rosenberg. Julian Messner. $3.95.*

WITH self-confidence as a well-established starting point, Rabbi Rosenberg maps out in a most enticing manner the road to "the true wonder of confidence in God." His guidebook is a kind of 20th-century proverbial philosophy in prose with some seventy-six one-, two- and three-minute chapters. In the main the spiritual home truths, the facts of faith, assembled and controlled by a master

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THE TRADING POST

[In this column from month to month readers will find an assortment of sermon ideas, outlines, texts, thought primers, illustrations, quotations — new and slightly used. You are invited to make free use of these items provided that for each one used you submit one of your own of equal quality and originality. Send all items for exchange to The Trading Post, The Pulpit, 407 S. Dearborn Street, Chicago 5, Illinois. No entries will be returned. Items accepted will be published with the name of the sender. — Ed.]

Everyman's ultimate cry: "Sirs, have I spoken one word all this while out of the world of words I had to say? Not one word! All was folly — I laughed and mocked! Sirs, my first true word all truth and no lie is — save me notwithstanding." — Count Guido Franceschini's final plea before his judges in Browning's *The Ring and the Book.*

•

Jesus
Knew what he wanted to do,
Began where he was,
Used what he had,
Did what he could,
And died saying,
"It is finished."

•

Dedicating a new church or chapel? See the prayer of consecration offered for his little chapel by Father Sebastian in Robert Fontaine's *The Happy Time.* Father Sebastian's church was a beautiful blending of love and mortar.

•

A high school girl's evaluation of current literature: "If a modern poet had written *To a Waterfowl,* the bird would never have made it."

Text: II Corinthians 1:9-10. Henri Amiel said, "Nothing resembles pride so much as discouragement." Is this true? If so, why? How?

•

Abandoning his cetological system unfinished Melville said in *Moby Dick,* "God keep me from ever completing anything. This whole book is but a draught — nay, but the draught of a draught. Oh, Time, Strength, Cash, and Patience!" Is there a sermon here? No? Well, we were just asking.

•

In *Dr. Zhivago* one of the characters says that "communion between mortals is immortal." What if this were true? What if this were the only immortality? In that case how much of heaven would there be for any one of us?

•

The Quality of God's Gift:
Unexpected
Unearned
Undeserved
Unequaled

•

"The human Heart to be allegorized as a cavern; at the entrance there is sunshine, and flowers growing about it. You step within, but a short distance, and begin to find yourself surrounded with a terrible gloom, and monsters of divers kinds; it seems like Hell itself. You are bewildered, and wander long without hope. At last a light strikes upon you. You peep towards it, and find yourself in a region that seems in some sort to reproduce the flowers and sunny beauty of the entrance, but all perfect. These are the depths of the heart, or of human nature, bright and peaceful; the gloom and terror may lie deep; but deeper still is the eternal beauty." — from Hawthorne's Journal.

of the art of religious journalese, are made to speak for themselves, and the book can be opened with profit and pleasure, advantage and absorbing interest, at any page. — *Johnstone G. Patrick.*

MIGHTY MEN OF GOD. *By Clark W. Hunt. Abingdon. $2.50.*

THIS book of thirteen biographical sermons based on Old Testament characters is fresh and contemporary, bristling with arresting interpretation, apt illustration and yet simple and direct. It is not easy to take the familiar figures of the Bible stories and make them come alive so that they seem like people we have met. But this author has succeeded in getting the quality of contemporaneity in his figures in a rare and vivid style. Solomon becomes The Symbol of Our Age; Abraham is God's Advance Agent; David is A Study in Strides and Stumbles.

This is no sophisticated book. It is homely and practical and down-to-earth in a most stimulating way. One of its fine features is the way each sermon revolves around a simple outline that helps to make real the content of the message. Thus David's secret is told in that: he was honest about himself; he had a friend; he had his God. Likewise Joseph is the Tall Man Above the Fog because: he was steady in time of temptation; he was steady in time of trouble; he was steady in time of triumph. This kind of sermon peg is most effective and will help the hearer to remember the truth.

The title of the book adds the phrase "with a good word for Cain." This is the first of the homilies, and a good sermon in which the preacher speaks a good word for that much maligned biblical character, the first murderer. He finds it possible to do so because we are all the sons of Cain and because we are all the sons of God.

This is the kind of biographical sermon that I enjoyed beyond my expectations because it insists that all of us are together in the stories of the men who people the pages of the Bible. It is a worthy example of biographical preaching at its best and most interesting levels. — *Clifford Ansgar Nelson, Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, St. Paul, Minn.*

A FAITH TO LIVE BY. *By Stuart LeRoy Anderson. Oxford University Press. $2.75.*

THIS book of fifteen meditations is a real find for me. It speaks directly to the man of today and puts religion not in some faraway place of contemplation and vision, but in the very place where we stand. The book consists of three sets of meditations, the first a series of five on Life. The second series is based on seven of the familiar parables. With fresh and illuminating insights to delight any reader, this is preaching at its best, pressing home the message of Jesus to the contemporary man. The third series of three meditations is based on three passages from the Apocryphal books. This is something new and out of the ordinary. But they illumine some of the preaching insights that are to be found in that neglected literature. — *Clifford Ansgar Nelson.*

ASSURANCE OF LIFE ETERNAL. *By Margaret E. Burton. Thomas Y. Crowell. $3.50.*

MISS Burton's anthology has provided an invaluable aid to those whose ministry to "eternity-haunted beings" facing death must come alive, not through argument but by living witnesses. Most valuable is the large number of less familiar sources. This book is a wonderful tool for the busy pastor, but more, it speaks to his own need for affirmation. — *William O. Byrd, First Methodist Church, Pine Bluff, Ark.*

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June 19 — 2nd Sunday after Pentecost.
June 26 — Nature Sunday.
July 3 — Independence Sunday.
July 4 — Independence Day.
July 10 — 5th Sunday after Pentecost.
July 17 — 6th Sunday after Pentecost.
July 24 — 7th Sunday after Pentecost.
July 31 — 8th Sunday after Pentecost.
Aug. 6 — The Transfiguration.
Aug. 7 — 9th Sunday after Pentecost.
Aug. 14 — 10th Sunday after Pentecost.
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